

NINETY-SIXTH DAY

Monday, 1 April 1946

Morning Session

[The Defendant [Von Ribbentrop](#) resumed the stand.]

THE PRESIDENT: Have any of the defendants' counsel any questions they want to put to the defendant?

DR. SEIDL: Yes, Your Honor. Witness, the preamble to the secret pact concluded between Germany and the Soviet Union on 23 August 1939 is worded more or less as follows:

"In view of the present tension between Germany and Poland, the following is agreed upon in case of a conflict..."

Do you recall whether the preamble had approximately that wording?

VON RIBBENTROP: I do not recall the exact wording, but it is approximately correct.

DR. SEIDL: Is it correct that the chief of the legal department of the Foreign Office, Ambassador Dr. Gaus, participated as legal adviser in the negotiations in Moscow on 23 August 1939 and drafted the treaty?

VON RIBBENTROP: Ambassador Gaus participated partly in the negotiations and drafted the agreements with me.

DR. SEIDL: I shall now read an extract from the statement by Ambassador Gaus and ask you a few questions in connection with it.

THE PRESIDENT: Dr. Seidl, what document are you going to read?

DR. SEIDL: I shall read from Paragraph 3 of the statement made by Dr. Gaus and in connection with it ask a few questions of the witness, because some points concerning this pact do not seem to have been sufficiently clarified as yet.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, General Rudenko?

GEN. RUDENKO: I do not know, Mr. President, what relation these questions have with the Defendant [Hess](#), who is defended by Dr. Seidl, or with the Defendant [Frank](#). I do not wish to discuss this affidavit, as I attach no importance whatsoever to it. I wish only to draw the attention of the Tribunal to the fact that we are not investigating the problems connected with the policy of the Allied

nations, but are investigating the charges against the major German war criminals; and such questions on the part of the Defense Counsel is an attempt to divert the attention of the Tribunal from the issues we are investigating. I therefore think it proper that questions of this kind should be rejected as not relevant.

[There was a pause in the proceedings while the Judges conferred.]

THE PRESIDENT: Dr. Seidl, you may ask the questions.

DR. SEIDL: Gaus stated, under Paragraph 3 of his affidavit:

"The plane of the Reich Foreign Minister whom I had to accompany as legal adviser in the intended negotiations arrived in Moscow at noon on 23 August 1939. On the afternoon of the same day the first conversation between Herr Von Ribbentrop and Mr. Stalin took place at which, on the German side, besides the Reich Foreign Minister, only Embassy Counsellor Hilger, as interpreter, and perhaps also Ambassador Count Schulenburg, but not myself, were present.

"The Reich Foreign Minister returned very satisfied from this long conference and indicated that it was as good as certain that it would result in the conclusion of the agreements desired on the part of Germany. The continuation of the conference at which the documents to be signed were to be discussed and completed, was scheduled for later in the evening. At this second conference I participated personally and so did Ambassador Count Schulenburg and Embassy Counsellor Hilger. On the Russian side the negotiations were conducted by Messrs. Stalin and Molotov, whose interpreter was Mr. Pavlov. An agreement on the text of the SovietGerman Non-aggression Pact was reached quickly and without difficulties.

"Herr Von Ribbentrop himself had inserted in the preamble to the agreement which I had drafted a rather far-reaching phrase concerning the formation of friendly German-Soviet relations to which Mr. Stalin objected with the remark that the Soviet Government could not suddenly present to the public German-Soviet assurances of friendship after they had been covered with pails of manure by the Nazi Government for 6 years. Thereupon this phrase in the preamble was deleted or rather changed.

"Besides the Non-aggression Pact there were negotiations for quite some time on a separate secret document, which according to my recollection was called a 'secret agreement' or 'secret additional agreement' and the terms of which were aimed at a demarcation of the mutual spheres of interest in the European territories situated between the two countries.

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Whether the expression 'spheres of interest' or other such expressions were used therein, I do not recall. In the document, Germany declared herself politically disinterested in Latvia, Estonia and Finland but considered Lithuania to be part of her sphere of influence.

"Regarding the political disinterest of Germany in the two Baltic countries mentioned, controversy arose when the Reich Foreign Minister, in accordance with his instructions,

wanted to have a certain part of the Baltic territory exempted from this political disinterest; this, however, was rejected on the part of the Soviets, especially on account of the ice-free ports in this territory.

"Because of this point, which apparently had already been discussed in Ribbentrop's first conversation, the Foreign Minister had put in a call to Hitler which came through only during the second discussion, and during which, in direct conversation with Hitler, he was authorized to accept the Soviet standpoint. A demarcation line was laid down for the Polish territory. I cannot remember whether it was drafted on a map which was to be attached to the document or only described in the document. Moreover, an agreement was reached in regard to Poland, stating approximately that the two powers would act in mutual agreement in the final settlement of questions concerning this country. It could, however, be possible that this last agreement regarding Poland was reached only when the change of the secret agreement mentioned later in Paragraph 5 was made.

"Regarding the Balkan States, it was confirmed that Germany had only economic interests there. The Non-aggression Pact and the secret agreement were signed rather late that same evening."

Witness, in the affidavit of Gaus, a pact is mentioned whereby the two powers agree to act in mutual agreement with regard to the final settlement of the questions concerning Poland. Had such an agreement already been reached on 23 August 1939?

VON RIBBENTROP: Yes, that is true. At that time the serious German-Polish crisis was acute, and it goes without saying that this question was thoroughly discussed. I should like to emphasize that there was not the slightest doubt in either Stalin's or Hitler's mind that, if the negotiations with Poland came to naught, the territories that had been taken from the two great powers by force of arms could also be retaken by force of arms. In keeping with this understanding, the eastern territories were occupied by Soviet troops and the western territories by German troops after victory. There is no doubt that Stalin can never accuse Germany of an aggression or

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of an aggressive war for her action in Poland. If it is considered an aggression, then both sides are guilty of it.

DR. SEIDL: Was the demarcation line in this secret agreement described merely in writing or was it drawn on a map attached to the agreement?

VON RIBBENTROP: The line of demarcation was roughly drawn on a map. It ran along the Rivers Rysia, Bug, Narew, and San. These rivers I remember. That was the line of demarcation that was to be adhered to in case of an armed conflict with Poland.

DR. SEIDL: Is it correct that on the basis of that agreement, not Germany but Soviet Russia received the greater part of Poland?

VON RIBBENTROP: I do not know the exact proportions, but, at any rate, the agreement was that the territories east of these rivers were to go to Soviet Russia and the territories west of these rivers were to be occupied by German troops, while the organization of this territory as intended by Germany was still an open question and had not yet been discussed by Hitler and myself. Then, later the Government General was formed when the regions lost by Germany after World War I were incorporated into Germany.

DR. SEIDL: Now, something else. You stated last Friday that you wanted Russia to join in the Tripartite Pact. Why did that fail?

VON RIBBENTROP: That failed because of Russian demands. The Russian demands concerned -- I should perhaps say first that I had agreed with M. Molotov in Berlin to conduct further negotiations through diplomatic channels. I wanted to influence the Fuehrer regarding the demands already made by Molotov in Berlin in order that some sort of an agreement or compromise might be arrived at.

Then Schulenburg sent us a report from Moscow with the Russian demands. In this report was, first of all, the renewed demand for Finland. To this the Fuehrer, as is well known, told Molotov that he did not wish that after the winter campaign of 1940 another war should break out in the North. Now the demand for Finland was raised again, and we assumed that it would mean the occupation of Finland. It was difficult since it was a demand which the Fuehrer had already turned down.

Another demand of the Russians was that of the Balkans and Bulgaria. Russia, as is well known, wanted bases there and wished to enter into close relations with Bulgaria. The Bulgarian Government, with whom we got in touch, did not want this. Moreover, this Russian penetration of the Balkans was for both the Fuehrer and Mussolini a difficult question because of our economic interests there: grain, oil, and so on. But above all it was the will of the Bulgarian Government themselves, which was against this penetration.

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Then, thirdly, there was the demand of the Russians for outlets to the sea and military bases on the Dardanelles; and then the request which Molotov had already expressed to me in Berlin, to secure somehow at least an interest in the outlets of the Baltic Sea. M. Molotov himself told me at that time that Russia naturally was also very much interested in the Skagerrak and Kattegat.

At that time I discussed these demands and requests fully with the Fuehrer. The Fuehrer said we would have to get in touch with Mussolini, who was very much interested in some of these demands. This took place, but neither the demands for the Balkans nor the demands for the Dardanelles met with the approval from Mussolini. As far as Bulgaria is concerned I have already stated that she did not want it either; and with regard to Finland, neither Finland nor the Fuehrer wanted to accede to the demands of the Soviet Union.

Negotiations were then carried on for many months. I recall that upon receipt of a telegram from Moscow in December 1940 I had another long conversation with the Fuehrer. I had an idea that, if we

could bring about a compromise between the Russian demands and the wishes of the various parties concerned, a coalition could be formed which would be so strong that it would eventually induce England to remain at peace.

THE PRESIDENT: What is this all an answer to? What was your question that this is supposed to be an answer to?

DR. SEIDL: In essence he has already answered the question.

THE PRESIDENT: Dr. Seidl, if he has answered the question you should stop him.

DR. SEIDL: Very well. I now come to another question: What was Adolf Hitler's opinion regarding the military strength of Russia?

VON RIBBENTROP: Adolf Hitler once said to me -- he expressed himself thus -- and this was when he became worried about what was taking place in Russia in the way of preparations against Germany: "We do not know of course what is concealed behind this gate, if some day we should really be forced to kick it open." From this and other statements which the Fuehrer made at this time I concluded that, on the basis of reports about Russia, he suffered great anxiety about the strength and the possible display of might by the Soviet Union.

DR. SEIDL: My next question: What circumstances induced Hitler to anticipate the threatening danger of an offensive by the Soviet Union?

VON RIBBENTROP: This was as follows ...

THE PRESIDENT: Hasn't this been dealt with extensively and exhaustively by the Defendant Goering? You are here as counsel for Hess.

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DR. SEIDL: If the Tribunal is of the opinion that this has been dealt with exhaustively, I shall withdraw the question.

THE PRESIDENT: Before you sit down, Dr. Seidl, you were putting Gaus' affidavit to the defendant, I suppose with the intention that he should say that the affidavit was true; is that right?

DR. SEIDL: Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: You didn't put to him Paragraph 4 of the affidavit at all, did you?

DR. SEIDL: I read only Paragraph 3 of the affidavit. I did not read Paragraph 1, 2, 4, and 5 in order to save time.

THE PRESIDENT: The answer to my question was, "yes," that you did not put it. Should you not put the end of Paragraph 4 to him, which reads in this way:

"The Reich Foreign Minister regulated his words in such a manner that he let a warlike conflict of Germany with Poland appear not as a matter already finally decided upon but only as an imminent possibility. No statements which could have included the approval or encouragement for such a conflict were made by the Soviet statesmen on this point. Rather the Soviet representatives limited themselves in this respect simply to taking cognizance of the explanations of the German representatives."

Is that correct?

DR. SEIDL: That is correct.

THE PRESIDENT: I am asking the witness. Is that correct?

VON RIBBENTROP: I may say the following to this. When I went to Moscow no final decision had been reached by the Fuehrer...

THE PRESIDENT: Well, couldn't you answer the question directly? I asked you whether the statement in the affidavit was correct or not. You can explain afterwards.

VON RIBBENTROP: Not quite correct, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Now you can explain.

VON RIBBENTROP: It is not correct insofar as at that time the decision to attack Poland had in no way been made by the Fuehrer. There is, however, no doubt that it became perfectly clear during the discussions in Moscow that there was at any time the possibility of such a conflict, if the last effort at negotiations failed.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, what is the difference between that and what I have just read to you? What I read to you was this:

"The Reich Foreign Minister regulated his words in such a manner that he let a warlike conflict of Germany with Poland

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appear not as a matter already finally decided upon but only as an imminent possibility."

I should have thought your explanation was exactly the same as that. That's all.

DR. SEIDL: Mr. President, may I mention something briefly in this connection? This witness Gaus was present only at the second conference. He was, however, not present at the long conference which took place previously between the witness Ribbentrop on the one hand and Molotov and Stalin on the other hand. At these conferences only Embassy Counsellor Hilger was present and I ask the Tribunal to call witness Hilger, who has, in view of the importance of this point, already been granted me.

THE PRESIDENT: Dr. Seidl, as you know, you can make any application in writing for calling any witness that you like; and also the Tribunal wishes me to say that if the Prosecution wish to have the witness Gaus here for a cross-examination they may do so.

DR. SEIDL: Then I should like to put in as Hess Exhibit Number 16 (Document Number Hess-16) the sworn affidavit of Ambassador Gaus.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, certainly.

MR. DODD: May it please the Tribunal, as far as I understand, there is some slight danger of the witness Gaus being removed from Nuremberg. I would like to state at this time that we would like to have him retained here for long enough time for possible crossexamination.

THE PRESIDENT: Very well.

Do any other members of the defendants' counsel want to ask questions?

DR. NELTE: The Defendant [Keitel](#) states that in the autumn of 1940, when the idea of a war with Russia was discussed by Hitler, he went to Fuschl in order to talk to you about this question. He believed that you too had misgivings about it. Do you recall that Keitel at the end of August or at the beginning of September was in Fuschl?

VON RIBBENTROP: Yes, that is correct. He did visit me at that time.

DR. NELTE: Do you recall that Keitel at that time stated to you his opinion about the probably imminent war?

VON RIBBENTROP: Yes, that is correct. He spoke of that at the time. I believe he said that the Fuehrer had discussed it with him.

DR. NELTE: What I am driving at is this: Keitel states that he spoke with you about a memorandum he intended to submit to Hitler

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which referred to the considerations which were to be taken into account in case of war with Soviet Russia.

VON RIBBENTROP: That is correct. Field Marshal Keitel told me at that time that he intended to submit a memorandum to Hitler, and he expressed his misgivings concerning a possible conflict between the Soviet Union and Germany.

DR. NELTE: Did you have the impression that Field Marshal Keitel was opposed to the war at that time?

VON RIBBENTROP: Yes, that is correct. I had absolutely that impression.

DR. NELTE: Is it true that he, as a result of this discussion, asked you to support his point of view with Hitler?

VON RIBBENTROP: Yes, that is correct, and I told him at that time that I would do so, that I would speak to Hitler, and he ought to do the same.

DR. NELTE: Another question, regarding the escape of the French General Giraud. Is it true that Keitel, when the French General Giraud escaped from Kbnigstein, asked you to take steps with the French Government to bring about the voluntary return of General Giraud?

VON RIBBENTROP: Yes, that is right. At that time he asked me whether it would not be possible, by way of negotiations with the French Government, to induce Giraud to return to imprisonment in some way or other.

DR. NELTE: Did a meeting then take place with General Giraud in occupied France through the intervention of Ambassador Abetz?

VON RIBBENTROP: Yes, such a meeting took place. I believe Ambassador Abetz met Giraud, who, as I recall, appeared in the company of M. Laval. The Ambassador did everything he could in order to induce the General to return, but finally did not succeed. The General was promised safe conduct for this meeting and upon its conclusion the General and Laval left.

DR. NELTE: The Prosecution has submitted an order, the subject of which was the branding of Soviet prisoners of war. The Defendant Keitel is held responsible for this order. He states that he spoke with you about this question at headquarters located at the time in Vinnitza; that he had to do it because all questions pertaining to prisoners of war also concerned the department for international law of the Foreign Office. Do you recall that in this connection Keitel asked you whether there were any objections from the point of view of international law to this branding which Hitler wished.

VON RIBBENTROP: The situation was this: I heard about the intention of marking prisoners of war and went to headquarters to

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speak with Keitel about this matter because it was my opinion that the marking of prisoners in such a way was out of the question. Keitel shared my opinion; and, so far as I recall, I believe he gave later orders that this intended form of marking was not to be used.

DR. NELTE: I have no further question.

FLOTTENRICHTER OTTO KRANZBUHLER (Counsel for Defendant [Doenitz](#)): Witness, when did you make the acquaintance of Admiral Doenitz?

VON RIBBENTROP: I made his acquaintance after he was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Navy.

FLOTTENRICHTER KRANZBUHLER: That was in 1943?

VON RIBBENTROP: I believe so.

FLOTTENRICHTER KRANZBUHLER: Did Admiral Doenitz before or after this time exert or try to exert any influence on German foreign policy?

VON RIBBENTROP: I have never heard that Admiral Doenitz tried to exert any influence on German foreign policy.

FLOTTENRICHTER KRANZBUHLER: Do you recall Marshal Antonescu's visit to the Fuehrer headquarters on 27 February 1944?

VON RIBBENTROP: I do recall the visit but not the date. Marshal Antonescu used to visit the Fuehrer frequently. I should say every six months or so; I believe you said at the beginning of 1944?

FLOTTENRICHTER KRANZBUHLER: Yes, on 27 February 1944.

VON RIBBENTROP: Yes, I think it is correct that he visited the Fuehrer at the beginning of 1944.

FLOTTENRICHTER KRANZBUHLER: Do you recall whether Antonescu, at that time, attended the discussion of the military situation, as guest?

VON RIBBENTROP: I am quite certain, because this was usually the case when Antonescu came to see the Fuehrer. The Fuehrer always explained the military situation to him, that is, he invited him to the so-called noon discussion of the military situation. I do not recall exactly now, but there can be no doubt that Marshal Antonescu attended the discussion of the military situation in February.

FLOTTENRICHTER KRANZBUHLER: Besides the military discussions were there also political discussions with Antonescu?

VON RIBBENTROP: Yes, every visit with Marshal Antonescu began by the Fuehrer's withdrawing either with the Marshal alone or sometimes also with me, but mostly with the Marshal alone, because he was the chief of state; a long detailed political discussion would ensue, to which I was generally called in later.

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FLOTTENRICHTER KRANZBUHLER: Did Admiral Doenitz take part in these political discussions?

VON RIBBENTROP: Certainly not, because the Fuehrer seldom invited military leaders to these political discussions with Marshal Antonescu. Later however, he did occasionally, but I do not recall that Admiral Doenitz took part in a discussion with Antonescu.

FLOTTENRICHTER KRANZBUHLER: I have no further questions.

DR. WALTER SIEMERS (Counsel for Defendant [Raeder](#)): Witness, the Prosecution have submitted a document concerning a discussion between you and the Japanese Foreign Minister Matsuoka on 29 March 1941. The document carries the Document Number 1877-PS, and is Exhibit Number USA-152.

A part of this document was read into the record by the Prosecution, and on Page 1007 of the German transcript (Volume III, Page 379) can be found among other things, the following passage which concerns Grossadmiral Raeder:

"Next, the RAM (Foreign Minister) turned again to the Singapore question. In view of the fears expressed by the Japanese of possible attacks by submarines based in the Philippines, and of the intervention of the English Mediterranean and Home Fleets, he had again discussed the situation with Grossadmiral Raeder. The latter had stated that the British Navy during this year would have its hands so full in English home waters and in the Mediterranean that it would not be able to send even a single ship to the Far East. Grossadmiral Raeder had described the United States submarines as so poor that Japan need not bother about them at all."

Witness, as the Defendant Raeder clearly remembers, you, as Foreign Minister, never spoke with him about strategic matters regarding Japan or even about the worth or worthlessness of American submarines. I should be obliged to you if you could clarify this point, whether there might be some confusion as to the person involved in this discussion.

VON RIBBENTROP: That is altogether possible. I do not recall that I ever spoke with Admiral Raeder about German-Japanese strategy. The fact was that we had only very loose connections with Japan on these questions. If at that time I said to Matsuoka what is written there, it is quite possible that I quoted the Fuehrer that he had said it to me. Naturally I could not have said it on my own initiative, because I did not know about it. I know that the Fuehrer spoke to me frequently about such points particularly with regard to Japan. It is possible therefore that this did not originate with

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Admiral Raeder but the Fuehrer. I do not know who made this note. Is it a ...

DR. SEEMERS: The document is entitled, "Notes on the conference between the Reich Foreign Minister and the Japanese Foreign Minister, Matsuoka..."

VON RIBBENTROP: I have seen that here. It is possible that the Fuehrer said that to me. In fact, I consider that probable. It is possible that some mistake was made in the note; that I do not know.

DR. SIEMERS: Witness, did you inform the Defendant Raeder of such political discussions as you had with Matsuoka or Oshima?

VON RIBBENTROP: No, that was not the case.

DR. SIEMERS: Did you ever speak with Grossadmiral Raeder about other political questions or have him present at political negotiations?

VON RIBBENTROP: No, that was not our practice. Generally, the Fuehrer kept military and political matters strictly separate, so that I, as Foreign Minister, never had an opportunity to discuss military or strategic matters at my office; but when questions of foreign policy were to be discussed, this took place

at the Fuehrer headquarters, but as I have seen from documents which I read for the first time here, matters were kept separate even there. In other words, if such discussions took place at all, a fact which I cannot recall at the moment, it could have been only at the Fuehrer headquarters.

DR. SIEMERS: Thank you.

DR. LATERNSEER: Witness, the State Secretary of the Foreign Office, Steengracht, who was heard here as a witness, answered in the negative my question as to whether the high military leaders were regularly informed by him about current political matters. Now I ask whether you, as Foreign Minister, informed high military leaders about political matters?

VON RIBBENTROP: No, I must answer this question in the same way as I answered the previous one. That was not our practice. All political and military matters were dealt with exclusively by the Fuehrer. The Fuehrer told me what I had to do in the diplomatic and political field, and he told the military men what they had to do militarily. I was occasionally, but very seldom, informed about military matters by the Fuehrer, and whatever the military men had to know about political matters they never learned from me; but if they learned at all, it was from the Fuehrer.

DR. LATERNSEER: I have no further questions.

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HERR GEORG BOHM (Counsel for SA): Witness, did you have an order or an instruction according to which you were to inform the SA leaders of the development and treatment of foreign political matters?

VON RIBBENTROP: The SA? No. There was no such order, and I had no such instructions.

HERR BOHM: Did the SA leadership have any influence on foreign policy at all?

VON RIBBENTROP: No.

HERR BOHM: And now I should like to ask a question for my colleague Dr. Sauter who is ill: Were you in 1943 witness to a conversation between Hitler and Himmler, in which the question was discussed as to whether [Von Schirach](#), who was then Reichsleiter, should be summoned before the Volksgericht (People's Court)?

VON RIBBENTROP: Yes, that is correct.

HERR BOHM: What consequences would such a trial before the Volksgericht have had for Schirach?

VON RIBBENTROP: I cannot say exactly, of course. I do not know the details of this matter. I only know that Himmler, in my presence, made the suggestion to the Fuehrer that Schirach should be brought and tried before the Volksgericht for some reason or other. I do not know the details. I was not interested in them. I said to the Fuehrer that this, in my opinion, would make a very bad impression from the point of view of foreign policy and I know that Himmler received no answer from the

Fuehrer; at any rate, he did not give the order. What consequences that would have had I cannot say, but when such a suggestion came from Himmler, the consequences were very serious.

HERR BOHM: How is it that you were witness to this conversation and how did you react to it?

VON RIBBENTROP: It was purely accidental; I have just stated that I told the Fuehrer as well as Himmler that it would make a very bad impression.

HERR BOHM: I have no further questions.

THE PRESIDENT: Are there any other questions on behalf of the defendants' counsel?

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Witness, when you began to advise Hitler on matters of foreign policy in 1933, were you familiar with the League of Nations declaration of 1927?

VON RIBBENTROP: I do not know which declaration you mean.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Don't you remember the League of Nations declaration of 1927?

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VON RIBBENTROP: The League of Nations has made many declarations. Please tell me which one you mean?

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: It made a rather important one about aggressive war in 1927, didn't it?

VON RIBBENTROP: I do not know this declaration in detail, but it is clear that the League of Nations, like everyone, was against an aggressive war, and at that time Germany was a member of the League of Nations.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Germany was a member, and the preamble of the declaration was:

"Being convinced that a war of aggression would never serve as a means of settling international disputes, and is in consequence an international crime... "

Were you familiar with that when you ...

VON RIBBENTROP: Not in detail, no.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: It was rather an important matter to be familiar with if you were going to advise Hitler, who was then Chancellor, on foreign policy, wasn't it?

VON RIBBENTROP: This declaration was certainly important, and corresponded exactly with my attitude at that time. But subsequent events have proved that the League of Nations was not in a position to save Germany from chaos.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Did you continue to hold that as your own view?

VON RIBBENTROP: I did not understand the question.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Did you continue to hold the expression of opinion I have quoted to you from the preamble as your own view?

VON RIBBENTROP: That was as such my fundamental attitude, but on the other hand I was of the opinion that Germany should be given help in some way.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: So I gathered. Now, apart from that, if you were not familiar in detail with that resolution, were you familiar in detail with the Kellogg-Briand Pact?

VON RIBBENTROP: Yes, I was familiar with it.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Did you agree with the view expressed in the preamble and in the pact that there should be a renunciation of war as an instrument of national policy?

VON RIBBENTROP: Yes,

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: I just want you to tell us how you carried that out. Let's take the first example. Are you telling

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this Tribunal that, as far as you know, no pressure or threats were made to Herr Von Schuschnigg?

VON RIBBENTROP: Do you mean in the discussions with Hitler at the Obersalzberg?

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Yes, on the 12th of February.

VON RIBBENTROP: At this discussion...

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Witness, answer the question first, and then you can give your explanation. Are you saying that no pressure or threats were put to Herr Von Schuschnigg on the 12th of February? Answer that "yes" or "no", and we will go into the explanation later.

VON RIBBENTROP: Not exactly, no. I believe that the dominating personality of the Fuehrer and the arguments that he presented made such an impression on Schuschnigg that he finally agreed to Hitler's proposals.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Now, let's just look into that.

VON RIBBENTROP: May I continue? I personally had a conversation at that time with Herr Schuschnigg after his first talk with Adolf Hitler, in which his reaction to the first conference became very clear to me. This reaction was one of being deeply impressed by Hitler's personality and by the arguments which Hitler submitted to him. Schuschnigg told me in this conversation, which was extremely cordial, that he too -- and I believe these were his words -- regarded it as a historical mission to bring the two peoples closer together.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Who were present, at the Berghof -- I don't say in the room, but in the building or about? Were there present Hitler, yourself, the Defendant Von Papen, the Defendant Keitel, General Sperrle, and General Von Reichenau?

VON RIBBENTROP: I think that is correct, yes.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: And on the morning of the 12th, I think that Hitler and Von Schuschnigg were together for about 2 hours before lunch in the morning, isn't that so?

VON RIBBENTROP: I do not recall the time exactly. Anyway, they had a long conversation, that is correct.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: And then, after lunch, Von Schuschnigg was allowed to have a short conversation with his own Foreign Minister, Guido Schmidt, isn't that so?

VON RIBBENTROP: I do not know exactly, but it is possible.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Then, after that, Von Schuschnigg and Guido Schmidt were called before you and the Defendant Von Papen, isn't that right?

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VON RIBBENTROP: I do not remember that. I do not think so.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Don't you remember that? Just think again.

VON RIBBENTROP: Do you mean -- then I believe I did not understand the question.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Then I will put it again. After a conversation that Schuschnigg had with Guido Schmidt, he and Schmidt came before you and the Defendant Von Papen and they had a conversation with you, which I will put to you in a moment. Now, isn't it right that you and Von Papen saw Von Schuschnigg and Guido Schmidt?

VON RIBBENTROP: No, I do not believe so. I do not believe that is true.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Don't you remember exhibiting to Von Schuschnigg a typewritten draft containing the demands made on Von Schuschnigg? Now, just think.

VON RIBBENTROP: That is absolutely possible. Hitler had dictated a memorandum, and it is possible that I gave it to Schuschnigg. I am not sure of the details now.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: What was the subject of that memorandum?

VON RIBBENTROP: That I do not know; and in order to explain my ignorance about the entire conference I would like to state that at this time I was not at all informed about the Austrian problem because Hitler had handled these matters personally and I had become Foreign Minister only a few days before.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: If you hand someone a memorandum, at an occasion which you have described to him as a historic meeting, presumably you can give the Tribunal at any rate an outline of what the memorandum contained. What were the points in the memorandum?

VON RIBBENTROP: Curiously enough, I really do not remember that in detail. This meeting was one between the Fuehrer and Schuschnigg, and everything that was done and agreed upon there was either dictated by the Fuehrer himself or was suggested to the Fuehrer by someone else. I did not know the details. I only knew that it was primarily a question of bringing about better relations between Germany and Austria. Since many National Socialists had been arrested in Austria the relations between the two countries had been greatly troubled.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Well, if I remind you, perhaps, it will bring it back. Were not they the three points for the reorganization of the Austrian Cabinet, including:

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The appointment of the Defendant [Seyss-Inquart](#) to the Ministry of Security in the Interior; second, a general political amnesty of Nazis convicted of crimes; and thirdly, a declaration of equal rights for Austrian National Socialists and the taking of them into the Fatherland Front?

Are these the points that you were putting to Von Schuschnigg?

VON RIBBENTROP: I do not remember exactly now but that may be about correct. At that time that corresponded with the vague notion and knowledge I had about Austrian affairs.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: And did you tell Von Schuschnigg that Hitler had informed you that these demands which you were offering were the final demands of the Fuehrer and that Hitler was not prepared to discuss them?

VON RIBBENTROP: I do not recall that, but it is possible that I told Von Schuschnigg something to that effect but at the moment I do not remember.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Did you say, "You must accept the whole of these demands?"

VON RIBBENTROP: No, I do not think so, I did not say that. I exerted no pressure whatsoever on Schuschnigg, for I still remember that this conversation which lasted about an hour to an hour and a half was confined to generalities and to personal matters and that I gained from this conversation a very favorable impression of Schuschnigg's personality, which fact I even mentioned to my staff later on. I put no pressure on Schuschnigg.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: You told us that before, and I am suggesting to you that at this conversation you were trying to get Schuschnigg to sign the document containing these terms which you agree that you may have had. I want you to remember the answer and remind you of that.

Don't you remember Herr Von Schuschnigg turning to the Defendant Von Papen and saying, "Now, you told me that I would not be confronted with any demands if I came to Berchtesgaden," and Herr

Von Papen apologizing and saying, "That is so. I did not know you were going to be confronted with these demands."

Don't you remember that?

VON RIBBENTROP: No, I do not remember that. That cannot be quite right.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: We will just see. Do you remember Von Schuschnigg being called back to speak to Hitler again and Guido Schmidt remaining with you to make some alterations in the document which you were putting?

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VON RIBBENTROP: It is quite possible that changes were made; it is conceivable. I do not remember the details, though.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: But did you hear that in this second conversation with Hitler, Hitler telling Schuschnigg that he must comply with these demands within 3 days?

VON RIBBENTROP: No, I am hearing that for the first time today. I did not know that. I was not present at the second conversation.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Just be a little careful before you say you have heard that for the first time today, because in a moment I will show you some documents. Are you sure you did not hear that Hitler told Schuschnigg that he must comply within 3 days, or Hitler would order the march into Austria?

VON RIBBENTROP: I consider that to be out of the question.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: If he had said that, you will agree that that would be the heaviest military and political pressure? There could be no other heavier pressure than suggesting a march into Austria, could there?

VON RIBBENTROP: In view of the tense situation that existed between the two countries at that time, that, of course, would have been a pressure. But one thing must be taken for granted; and that is, that under no circumstances would it have been possible in the long run to find any solution between the two countries if there were no closer contact, and from the beginning -- I should like to state this here -- it was always my view that the two countries should form some sort of close alliance, and I visualized a customs and currency union ...

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: You've given that view about three times. Let us come back to this interview which I am putting back to you, that took place on the 12th of February. Don't you know that Schuschnigg said: "I am only the Bundeskanzler. I have to refer to President Miklas, and I can sign this protocol only subject to reference to President Miklas."

VON RIBBENTROP: No, I do not remember that any more in detail.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Don't you remember Hitler opening the door and calling Keitel?

VON RIBBENTROP: No; I only learned here that this is supposed to have happened. I have no knowledge whatsoever about that. I heard about it here for the first time.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: You know it is true, don't you?

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VON RIBBENTROP: I do not know. I heard about it here for the first time.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Don't you remember Keitel's going in to speak to Hitler?

VON RIBBENTROP: I have already said that I did not hear about that. I do not know, I cannot say.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Do you know that Von Schuschnigg signed this document on the condition that within 3 days these demands would be fulfilled, otherwise Germany would march into Austria?

VON RIBBENTROP: No, I did not know that.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: I think it would be convenient if the witness had the German Document Book in front of him. I tried to get most of the pages agreeing.

THE PRESIDENT: Sir David, perhaps this would be a good time to break off.

[A recess was taken.]

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Witness, will you look first at the Defendant [Jodl](#)'s diary, the entry of the 13th of February, it is the Ribbentrop Document Book, Page 9, Exhibit Number USA-72, Document Number 1780-PS. The entry is as follows:

"In the afternoon General K." -- that is Keitel -- "asks Admiral C." -- that is Admiral Canaris -- "and myself to come to his apartment. He tells us that the Fuehrer's order is to the effect that military pressure by shamming military action should be kept up until the 15th. Proposals for these deceptive maneuvers are drafted and submitted to the Fuehrer by telephone for approval."

You were suggesting on Friday that the Defendant Jodl had go hold of some rumors or gossip thdt were going around the Berghof. That rumor or gossip was a definite order from his superior officer, General Keitel, wasn't it?

VON RIBBENTROP: I know absolutely nothing about military measures, therefore I cannot pass judgment on the value of this entry. The Fuehrer did not inform me about any milita measures regarding Austria.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Are you telling the Tribunal you were there, that you were taking part, handling the document and that Hitler never said a word to you about what he was arranging with the Defendant Keitel, who was also there?

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VON RIBBENTROP: That is correct.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Well now, just look at the next entry for the 14th of February:

"At 2:40 o'clock the agreement of the Fuehrer arrives. Canaris went to Munich to the Counterintelligence Office (Abwehrstelle VII) and initiated the different measures. The effect was quick and strong. In Austria the impression is created that Germany is undertaking serious military preparation."

Are you telling this Tribunal that you know nothing about either these military measures or the effect on Austria?

VON RIBBENTROP: I did not know anything about the military measures, but I consider it quite possible that the Fuehrer, in order to put more stress on his wishes, caused something to be done in this field...

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: But, Witness, just a moment!

VON RIBBENTROP: ... and that may have contributed in the end to the solution of the problem.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Yes, I quite agree. That is just why I am putting it to you that it did contribute. But surely you as Foreign Minister of the Reich, with all the channels available to a foreign minister, knew something about the effect in Austria, which General Jodl was remarking, that "the effect was quick and strong." -- the impression was "created that Germany is undertaking serious military preparations." Are you telling the Tribunal, on your oath, that you knew nothing about the effect in Austria?

VON RIBBENTROP: I would like to point out again that. I did not know anything about military measures and, if I had known, I would not have the slightest reason not to say here that it was not so. It is a fact, however, that in the days before and after the conversations between the Fuehrer and Schuschnigg, I was so busy taking over the Foreign Office that I treated the Austrian problem, at that time, merely as a secondary matter in foreign policy. I did not play a leading role in the handling of the Austrian problem...

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: We know you said that before, that you were engaged in the Foreign Office, and my question was perfectly clear -- my question was: Are you telling this Tribunal that you did not know anything about the effect in Austria -- you, as Foreign Minister of the Reich? Now answer the question. Did you or did you not know of the effect in Austria?

VON RIBBENTROP: I did not know anything about that effect, and I did not observe it in detail either.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: I see, that is your story and you want that to be taken as a criterion, a touchstone of whether or not

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you are telling the truth; that you, as Foreign Minister of the Reich, say that you knew nothing about the effect in Austria of the measures taken by Keitel on the Fuehrer's orders? Is that your final answer?

VON RIBBENTROP: To that I can tell you again quite precisely, I learned from the Fuehrer when I went to London a little later, and that is absolutely the first thing I remember about the entire Austrian affair, that matters in Austria were working, out more or less as agreed upon in the conversations in Berchtesgaden. I did not make any particular observations in detail at that time, so far as I remember. It is possible that this or that detail slipped my memory in the meantime, for many years have passed since then.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Just look at the next two entries in Jodl's diary:

"15 February. In the evening, an official announcement about the positive results of the conference at Obersalzberg was issued."

"16 February. Changes in the Austrian Government, and the general political, amnesty."

Do you remember my putting to you what Herr Von Schuschnigg signed, and the condition was made that the matters would come into effect within 3 days; within 3 days there was a conference about the effects and the changes were announced in Austria in accordance with the note that you had put to Schuschnigg. You can see that that is clear, isn't it -- 3 days -- you still say...

VON RIBBENTROP: Of these 3 days, as I have told you already, I know nothing; but it was a matter of course that this meeting would have some results in the way of appeasing.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: You call it "appeasing"? Is that your considered view to the Tribunal, that assuming that the Defendant Jodl is telling the truth or assuming that the Defendant Keitel said that to him, as General Jodl was saying, that these military preparations should be put in hand, isn't that the most severe political and military pressure that could be put on the chancellor of another state?

VON RIBBENTROP: If one considers the problem from a higher viewpoint, no; I have a different opinion. Here was a problem which might possibly have led to war, to a European war; and I believe, and I also said that later to Lord Halifax in London, that it was better to solve this problem than to allow it to become a permanent sore spot on the body of Europe.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: I don't want to put words in your mouth. Do you mean by the last answer, that it was better

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that political and military pressure should be put on Schuschnigg, so long as the problem was solved? Is that your view?

VON RIBBENTROP: I did not get that question. May I ask you to repeat it?

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: My question was: Is it your view that it was better that political and military pressure should be put on Herr Von Schuschnigg if by that means the problem was solved?

VON RIBBENTROP: If by that means, a worse complication, that is to say a war was actually avoided, I consider that was the better way.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Just tell me, why did you and your friends keep Schuschnigg in prison for 7 years?

VON RIBBENTROP: I do not know, at any rate, I believe Schuschnigg -- I do not know the details -- must at that time have done something which was against the State or the interests of the State. But if you say "prison", I know only from my own recollection that the Fuehrer said and emphasized several times that Schuschnigg should be treated particularly well and decently and that he was not in a prison but lodged in a house and also, I believe, that his wife was with him. I cannot, however, say more on the subject from my own experience and from my own observation.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: You mean "prison." I will substitute for it "Buchenwald" and "Dachau". He was at both Buchenwald and Dachau. Do you think he was enjoying himself there?

VON RIBBENTROP: I only heard here that Herr Schuschnigg was in a concentration camp; I did not know before.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Just make a change, just try to answer my question. Why did you and your friends keep Schuschnigg in prison for 7 years?

VON RIBBENTROP: I cannot say anything on that point. I can only say and repeat, that, according to what I heard at that time, he was not in prison but confined in a villa and had all the comforts possible. That is what I heard to that time and I was glad about it because, as I have said already, I liked him.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: There is one thing he did not have, Witness, he did not have the opportunity of giving his account as to what had happened at Berchtesgaden or of his side of the Anschluss to anyone for these 7 years, did he? That is quite obvious with all you say, that he was very comfortable at Buchenwald and Dachau, wherever he was, but comfortable or not, he didn't get the chance of putting his side of the happenings to the world, did he?

VON RIBBENTROP: That I could not judge.

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SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: You couldn't judge? You know perfectly well, don't you, that Herr Von Schuschnigg was not allowed to publish his account of anything while he was under restraint for these 7 years? Don't you know that quite well?

VON RIBBENTROP: That may be assumed...

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Now...

VON RIBBENTROP: It may have been in the interests of the State, however.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Well, that is your view of it. We will pass to another subject.

I am going to ask you a few questions now about your share in the dealing with Czechoslovakia. Will you agree with me, that in March of 1938, the Foreign Office, that is, you, through your ambassador in Prague, took over control of the activities of the Sudeten Deutsche Party under Konrad Henlein?

VON RIBBENTROP: I am sorry but that is not correct. May I explain...

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Before you explain, I think you might save time if you look at the document book on Page 20 in your book, it is Page 31 in the English book, and listen while I refer you to a letter from your ambassador.

VON RIBBENTROP: Which number, please?

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Page 20. It is a letter from your ambassador in Prague to the Foreign Office.

If I may explain to the Tribunal, it is not the defendant's document book, it is the Prosecution's book. I will see, hereafter, that it is correct.

[Turning to the defendant]: Now, this letter from your ambassador to the Foreign Office ...

VON RIBBENTROP: Yes, I know about that letter. May I ...

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Just let me refer you to Paragraph 1. I refer you also to Paragraph 3, so you need not be worried that I shall miss it.

Paragraph 1:

"The line of German Foreign policy, as transmitted by the German Legation, is exclusively decisive for the policy and tactics of the Sudeten German Party. My" -- that is, your ambassador -- "directives are to be complied with implicitly."

Paragraph 2:

"Public speeches and the press will be co-ordinated uniformly with my approval. The editorial staff of Zeit is to be improved."

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Paragraph 3:

"Party leadership abandons the former intransigent line which, in the end, might lead to political complications, and adopts the line of gradual promotion of Sudeten German

interests. The objectives are to be set in every case with my participation and to be promoted by parallel diplomatic action." (Document Number 3060-PS)

Having read that, don't you agree with me -- what I put to you a moment ago -- that the activities of the Sudeten German Party were to take place according to the directives?

VON RIBBENTROP: May I state an opinion on that now?

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: I would like the answer to that question first, and I am sure the Tribunal will let you make an explanation. It is perfectly easy to answer that question "yes" or "no". Isn't it right that that letter shows that the Sudeten German Party was acting under your directives; isn't that right?

VON RIBBENTROP: No.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Why not?

VON RIBBENTROP: I would like to explain. This letter in itself is a crowning proof of the fact that things were quite to the contrary. Between the Sudeten German Party and many agencies in the Reich, connections had been established; this was quite natural, because there was a very strong movement among the Sudeten Germans which was striving for closer connection with the Reich, especially after Adolf Hitler had come to power. These tendencies were beginning to impair the relations between Germany and Czechoslovakia and this very letter bears proof of the fact that I attempted gradually to put these uncontrolled connections, which existed between the Sudeten Germans and the Reich, in some way under control.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: That is not what I am asking you, Witness. What I put to you, and I put it to you three times, I think, quite clearly: Does this letter show that that Party, the Sudeten German Party, was from that time acting under your directions? Are you still denying that?

VON RIBBENTROP: Yes, I deny that emphatically. The case is just the opposite. This letter indicates an attempt to direct the German-Czech relations, which had become very difficult due to the natural desire of the Sudeten Germans to establish closer relations with the German people, into right and sensible channels, which however, shortly after this letter, unfortunately failed.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Now, if you deny what I have put to you, what is meant when your ambassador writes to the Foreign Office and, says that the line of German policy, as transmitted

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by the German Legation, is exclusively decisive for policy and tactics of the Sudeten German Party? What does that mean if it doesn't mean what you have said -- that the Party was acting under your direction? What else can it mean if it doesn't mean that?

VON RIBBENTROP: It means exactly what I have said, that the legation should try to induce the leadership of the Sudeten Germans to adopt a sensible program, so that the illegal tendencies which

were existent should not lead to difficulties in German-Czech relations. That was at that time the purport of the conversation with the legation in Prague and that is quite clearly expressed by this letter.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Let us see what this sensible program which you were suggesting was. The next day, on the 17th of March, Konrad Henlein writes to you and suggests a personal talk; and if you will turn over to Page 26 of the German document book -- Page 33 of the English -- you will find the note of the personal talk which you had at the Foreign Office on the 29th of March with Henlein, Karl Hennann Frank, and two other gentlemen whose names are not so well known. (Document Number 2788-PS, Exhibit Number USA-95) I only want you to look at four sentences in that, after the first one: "The Reichsminister started out by emphasizing the necessity to keep the conference, which had been scheduled, strictly a secret."

And then you refer to the meeting that the Fuehrer had had with Konrad Henlein the afternoon before. I just want you to have that in mind.,

Now, if you will look down the page, after the "1" and "2", there is a paragraph which begins "The Foreign Minister", and the second sentence is:

"It is essential to propose a maximum program which as its final aim grants full freedom to the Sudeten Germans. It appears dangerous to be satisfied prematurely with promises of the Czechoslovakian Government, which, on the one hand, would give the impression abroad that a solution has been found and, on the other hand, would only partially satisfy the Sudeten Germans."

Then, if you will look one sentence further on, after some uncomplimentary remarks about Benes, it says:

"The aim of the negotiations to be carried on by the Sudeten German Party with the Czechoslovakian Government would finally be to avoid entry into the government" -- Observe the next words -- "by the extension and gradual specification of the demands to be made."

And then you make the position of the Reich Cabinet clear:

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"The Reich Cabinet" -- the next sentence but one -- "itself must refuse to appear towards the government in Prague or towards London and Paris as the advocate" -- note the next words -- "or pacemaker of the Sudeten German demands."

The policy which I suggest to you was now to direct the activities of the Sudeten Germans. They were to avoid agreement with the Czechoslovak Government, avoid participation in the Czechoslovak Government, and the Reich Cabinet in its turn would avoid acting as mediator in the matter; in other words, Witness, that you, through your influence on the Sudeten Germans, were taking every step and

doing your utmost to see that no agreement could be reached on the difficulties or the minority problem. Isn't that right? Isn't that what you were telling them at that interview?

VON RIBBENTROP: No, that is not so.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Give your explanation. What would you say these words meant?

VON RIBBENTROP: I summoned Konrad Henlein at that time, and believe it was the only time, or perhaps I saw him once more; unfortunately, only once or twice, in order to enjoin him, too, to work for a peaceful development of the Sudeten German problem. The demands of the Sudeten Germans were already far-reaching at that time. They wanted to return to the Reich. That was more or less tacit or was expressed. It seemed to me a solution which was dangerous and which had to be stopped in some way or another because otherwise it might lead to a war. Henlein finally came to see me then, but I wish to point out in advance that it was the only time, I believe, that I discussed the matter thoroughly with Henlein, and soon afterwards I lost control of the matter. The entire Sudeten German problem, that is, what is contained in this letter and about which there can be no doubt, is:

Firstly, that I wanted to bring the efforts of the Sudeten Germans to a peaceful development so that we could support it diplomatically also, which seemed to me absolutely justified.

And secondly, that in this way we should avoid the sudden development of a situation which, by acts of terror or other wild incidents, would lead to a German-Czech and European crisis.

Those were at that time the reasons why I summoned Henlein.

Now, as to the various sentences which the Prosecutor has read, it is clear that the Sudeten German Party had at that time very far-reaching demands. Naturally, they wanted Adolf Hitler to send an ultimatum to Prague saying "You must do that, and that is final," and that is what they would have preferred.

We did not want that, of course. We wanted a quiet, peaceful development and solution of these things. Therefore, I discussed

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with Henlein at that time the way in which the Sudeten German Party was to proceed in order to put through their demands gradually. The demands which I had in mind at that time were demands for a far-reaching cultural autonomy, and possibly autonomy in other fields too.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: If you were thinking of cultural and social autonomy, why were you telling these gentlemen not to come to an agreement with the Prague Government?

VON RIBBENTROP: I could not specify that now. That may have been for tactical considerations. I assume that Konrad Henlein made such a suggestion and that I agreed with it. Naturally I did not know the problem too well in detail and this note must be -- I presume that what happened was that Henlein himself merely explained his program -- the details are not contained here -- and that I agreed to it

more or less. Therefore, I assume that at that time it seemed perhaps advisable to Henlein for tactical reasons not to enter into the government and assume responsibilities at that moment, but rather to try first to proceed with the matter in a different way.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: That was the 29th of March, and you have told the Tribunal a moment ago about your anxiety for peace. You very soon knew that there wasn't going to be any question of relying on peaceful measures, didn't you? Can you remember? Just try and apply yourself to it, because you have obviously been applying your mind to this. Can you remember when Hitler disclosed to you that he was making the military preparations for occupying Czechoslovakia that autumn?

VON RIBBENTROP: Adolf Hitler spoke very little to me about military matters. I do not remember such a disclosure, but I know of course that the Fuehrer was determined to solve this problem at a fixed time; and according to the experiences which Germany had had in past years, it was for him a matter of course that to do this he was obliged, I might say, to take some sort of military measures in order to put more pressure on his demands.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Let me help you about that. Turn on to Page 31 of your document book. It is Page 37 of the English Document Book. (Document Number 2360-PS, Exhibit GB-134)

VON RIBBENTROP: Page 31?

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Page 31 of your document book, yes. It is a quotation from Hitler's speech in January 1939, but it happens to make clear this point. You see he says -- have you got it, Witness?

VON RIBBENTROP: Yes, I have it.

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SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE:

"On the basis of this unbearable provocation, which was still further emphasized by truly infamous persecution and terrorizing of our Germans there, I have now decided to solve the Sudeten German question in a final and radical manner. On 28 May I gave:

"1. The order for the preparation of military steps against this State" -- that is Czechoslovakia -- "to be completed by 2 October.

"2. I ordered the intensive and speedy completion of our line of fortifications in the West."
(Document Number 2360-PS)

I want to remind you of that, because there was a meeting on the 28th of May, and that is Hitler's own account of it. Put in another way, he said, "It is my absolute will that Czechoslovakia should disappear from the map." And then he made clear the other thing about the defensive front in the West.

Now, do you remember that meeting, the 28th of May?

VON RIBBENTROP: I have here, I believe, seen the document about it. I do not recall the meeting.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Well, if -- I think Captain Fritz Wiedemann was still adjutant of the Fuehrer at that time; it was before he went abroad -- he says you were there, would you deny it?

VON RIBBENTROP: I have seen that, but I believe that is an error by Herr Wiedemann.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: But you think you weren't there?

VON RIBBENTROP: I am inclined to believe that it is an error. At any rate I do not remember that meeting. I could not say for sure. Generally I was not drawn into military affairs, but in this case I cannot say for sure. But I knew that it was common talk that the Fuehrer, in the course of the year 1938, became more and more determined to assure the rights, as he put it, of the Sudeten Germans; I knew that he had made certain military preparations for that purpose, but I did not know in what form and to what extent.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Just to put your point of view fairly -- I don't want to put anything more into it -- you knew that military preparations were being made, but you did not know the details of what we know now as "Fall Grun."

VON RIBBENTROP: No, I did not know any details; I never heard about them, but I knew that during the last weeks and months of the crisis ...

DR. HORN: Mr. President, I object to this question. I believe I may, in order to save time, just point out that the entire Sudeten German policy was sanctioned by the four great powers, England,

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France, Italy, and Germany, and by the Munich Agreement which determined this policy. Therefore, I do not see that in this respect there can be a violation of International Law.

THE PRESIDENT: The Tribunal thinks the question is perfectly proper.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Now, at the time you knew enough to discuss the possible course of the possible war with the foreign personalities. Would you look on to Page 34, that is Page 40 of the English book. These are the notes of a discussion with the Italian Ambassador. I do not know which of your officials it took place with, but I want you to look at where it says in a handwritten note "only for the Reichsminister."

"Attolico further remarked that we had indeed revealed unmistakably to the Italians our intentions against the Czechs. Also, as to the date he had information so far that he might go on leave for perhaps 2 months, but certainly not later than..." (Document Number 2800-PS)

If you look at the date you will see it is the 18th of July, and 2 months from the 18th of July would be the 18th of September. Then if you will look, a month later there is a note, I think signed by yourself, on the 27th of August:

"Attolico paid me a visit. He had received another written instruction from Mussolini, asking that Germany communicate in time the probable date of action against Czechoslovakia. Mussolini asked for such notification, as Attolico assured me, in order: 'to be able to take in due time the necessary measures on the French frontier.'

"Note: I replied to Ambassador Attolico, just as on his former *demarche*, that I could not give him any date, that, however, in any case Mussolini would be the first one to be informed of any decision." (Document Number 2792-PS)

So that it is quite clear, isn't it, that you knew that the general German preparations for an attack on Czechoslovakia were under way but the date had not been fixed beyond the general directive of Hitler, that it was to be ready by the beginning of October. That was the position in July and August, wasn't it?

VON RIBBENTROP: In August, 27 August, there was, of course, already a sort of crisis between Germany and Czechoslovakia about that problem; and it is quite clear that during that time there was some alarm as to the final outcome. And apparently, according to this document, I said to the Italian Ambassador that in case crisis developed into a military action, Mussolini would, of course, be notified in advance.

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SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: And Mussolini would be ready to make a demonstration on the French frontier in order to help forward your military plans; is that right?

VON RIBBENTROP: That is in this document, but I do not know anything about it. Perhaps Attolico said that; if it says so here he must have said it.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Now, just turn over to about the same time, Pages 36 to 38, Pages 41 to 43 of the English book. I do not want to take up time in reading it all, but that is the account of the meeting which you had with the Hungarian Ministers Imredy and Kanya. And I should be very glad if, in the interest of time, you would try to answer the general question.

Weren't you trying in your discussions with Imredy and Kanya to get the Hungarians to be prepared to attack Czechoslovakia, should war eventuate?

VON RIBBENTROP: I am not very familiar with the contents of this document. May I read it first, please?

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: I will just read to you ...

VON RIBBENTROP: I may perhaps be able to answer it from recollection. I do not know exactly what the document says, but my recollection is, that at that time a crisis was impending. It is quite

natural, if an armed conflict about the Sudeten German problem was within the realm of possibility, that Germany should then establish some sort of contact with neighboring states. That is a matter of course, but I believe ...

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: But you went a little beyond contacting them, didn't you? The document says at the end of the sixth paragraph, "Von Ribbentrop repeated that whoever desires revision must exploit the good opportunity and participate." (Document Number 2796-PS)

That is a bit beyond contacting people. What you are saying to the Hungarians is: "If you want the revision of your boundaries, you have to come into the war with us." It is quite clear, isn't it, Witness, that is what you were saying, that is what you were trying to do?

VON RIBBENTROP: That is exactly in line with what I just said. I do not know if that expression was used, but, at any rate, it is clear that at that time, I remember, I told these gentlemen that the possibility of a conflict was present and that in such a case it would be advisable if we reached an agreement regarding our interests. I would like to mention that Hungary, during all the preceding years, considered it one of the hardest conditions of the peace treaty that these territories in the north had been separated from her and naturally she was very much interested in the agreement.

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SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: You were very much interested in offering them revision. Just look at the last two paragraphs. It is headed "The 25th." It should be Page 38 of your document book. It begins -- the very end of this statement:

"Concerning Hungary's military preparedness for participation in case of a German-Czech conflict, Von Kanya mentioned several days ago that his country would need a period of one or two years in order to develop adequately the armed strength of Hungary. During today's conversation, Von Kanya corrected this remark and said that Hungary's military situation was much better; his country would be ready, as far as armaments were concerned, to take part in the conflict by 1 October of this year." (Document Number 2797-PS)

You see that? What I am putting to you, Witness, is this: That your position was perfectly clear. First of all, you get the Sudeten Germans under your control. Then you learned from Hitler that there were military preparations. Then you get the Italians in line. Then you get the Hungarians in line. You are getting everyone ready for aggression against Czechoslovakia. That is what I am putting to you. I want you to be quite clear about it, to be under no misapprehension. Now, look, what ...

VON RIBBENTROP: May I answer to that?

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Yes, certainly, if you like.

VON RIBBENTROP: I said once before that the Sudeten German Party was unfortunately not under my control. Moreover, it is and was my view that it was the fundamental right of the Sudeten Germans,

according to the law of the sovereign rights of peoples which had been proclaimed in 1919, to decide themselves where they wanted to belong.

When Adolf Hitler came, this pressure to join the Reich became very strong: Adolf Hitler was determined to solve this problem, either by diplomatic means or, if it had to be, by other means. That was obvious, and became more so to me. At any rate, I personally did everything to try to solve the problem diplomatically. On the other hand, however, in order to bring about a situation such as eventually led to Munich, I naturally tried my utmost to surround Germany with friends in order to make our position as strong as possible in the face of such a problem.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: You knew perfectly well, did you not, that the Fall Grun and Hitler's military plans envisaged the conquest of the whole of Czechoslovakia? You knew that, didn't you?

VON RIBBENTROP: No, I did not know that. As far as the Sudeten-German problem is concerned, the British Government themselves concluded the agreement at Munich by which the entire

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problem was solved in the way I always strove to achieve it by German diplomacy.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Witness, I am not going to argue politics with you on any point. I only remind you of this: That the Fall Grun and Hitler's plans on this matter had been known to His Majesty's Government only since the end of the war, when it came into our possession as a captured document. What I asked you was you say that as the Foreign Minister of the Reich, you did not know of these military plans, that the conquest of the whole Czechoslovakia was envisaged? You say that? You want the Tribunal to believe that?

VON RIBBENTROP: I repeat again that I read about Fall Grun and the conception of Fall Grun here for the first time in the documents. I did not know that term before, nor was I interested. That the Fuehrer envisaged a more far-reaching solution became, of course, clear to me later in the course of the subsequent developments and by the establishment of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Just a moment. We will get to that in a moment. I just want you to look at the final act of preparation which you were doing, and I am suggesting for this clear aggression; if you will look at Page 45 in the book in front of you, you will see a note from the Foreign, Office to the Embassy in Prague.

"Please inform Deputy Kundt, at Konrad Henlein's request, to get into touch with the Slovaks at once and induce them to start their demands for autonomy tomorrow."
(Document Number 2858-PS)

That was your office's further act, wasn't it, in order to make things difficult for the Government in Prague? You were getting your friends to induce -- to use your own word -- the Slovaks to start an advance for autonomy, is that right? Is that what your office was doing?

VON RIBBENTROP: This is, beyond doubt, a telegram from the Foreign Office. I do no longer recall the details, but according to the contents, Henlein apparently approached us to send a telegram because Henlein was apparently of the opinion, at that time, that he should put the demands for autonomy to the Prague Government. How that came about, I could not say in detail today. I would like to emphasize again that Conrad Henlein's activity -- I say, unfortunately, and I said so before -- was far beyond my control. I saw Henlein only once or twice during that entire time.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: I am not going to take you through all the details. You understand what I'm suggesting to you, that your office was now taking one of its last steps, because this was in the middle of the crisis, on the 19th of September, trying to weaken the Czech Government by inducing demands of autonomy

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from the Slovaks. You said that you were only passing on Henlein's wishes. If you like to leave it at that, I shall not trouble you further. Besides, you suggested -- I come on to what took place in the spring and ask you one or two questions about that. In the spring Hitler was out and you acquiesced in his wishes, without -- I was going to say swallowing, but I want to choose my language carefully -- to obtain the adherence of Bohemia and Moravia to the Reich and to make Slovakia separate from Bohemia and Moravia. Now, just look on to Page 65 of the book in front of you. That is a telegram in secret code from the Foreign Office, from yourself in fact, to the Embassy in Prague.

"With reference to telephone instructions given by Kordt today, in case you should get any written communications from President Hacha, please do not make any written or verbal comments or take any other action but pass them on here by ciphered telegrams. Moreover, I must ask you and the other members of the legation to make a point of not being available during the next few days if the Czech Government wants to communicate with you."
(Document Number 2815-PS)

Why were you so anxious that your ambassador should not carry out these ordinary functions and form a channel of communication with the Czech Government?

VON RIBBENTROP: That happened as follows. I remember very well. That had the following reasons: The Foreign Minister of Czechoslovakia, Chvalkovsky, on one of these days, it must have been the same day, approached the envoy in Prague, saying that President Hacha wished to speak to the Fuehrer. I had reported that to the Fuehrer, and the Fuehrer had agreed to receive the Czechoslovakian Prime Minister or the Czechoslovakian President. The Fuehrer said, at the same time, that he wished to conduct these negotiations himself and that he did not wish anybody else, even the legation, to interfere in any way. That, according to my recollection, was the reason for this telegram. No one was to undertake anything in Prague; whatever was done would be done by the Fuehrer personally.

I wish to point out that also at that time signs of an impending crisis between Prague and ourselves became apparent. The visit of President Hacha or his desire to see the Fuehrer can be explained as being the result of this situation in general.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Well, now, I would like to remind you what you and the Fuehrer were doing on that day. You will find that if you look at Page 66, which is 71 of the English book.

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You were having a conference, you and the Fuehrer, with Meissner and the Defendant Keitel and Dietrich and Keppler; and you were having the conference with the Slovaks, with M. Tiso. Do you remember that conference?

VON RIBBENTROP: Yes, I remember that conference very well.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Well, then, I will ask you a general question and perhaps without putting the details to you. What Hitler and you were doing at that conference was saying this to the Slovaks: "If you do not declare your independence of Prague, we shall leave you to the tender mercies of Hungary." Isn't that in a sentence a fair summary of what Hitler and you were saying at that conference?

VON RIBBENTROP: That is correct to a certain degree. But I would like to add a further statement to that. The situation at the time was as follows, and one has to look at it from a political point of view: The Hungarians were highly dissatisfied and they wanted to regain the territories which they had lost by the peace treaty and today form a part of Czechoslovakia, that is the Slovak part of Czechoslovakia. There were, therefore, constantly great differences between Pressburg (Bratislava) and Budapest and, chiefly, also between Prague and Budapest. The outbreak of an armed conflict could be expected at any time; at least half a dozen times we were given to understand by the Hungarian Government that this could not go on forever; that they must have their revision in one way or the other. The situation was such that for quite some time very strong movements for independence existed among the Slovaks. We were approached on this matter quite frequently, at first by Tuka and later by Tiso. In this conference described here, the situation was that the Fuehrer, who knew for weeks of the endeavors of the Slovaks to become independent, finally received Tiso, later President of the State, and told him that now, of course -- I believe he told him during this conversation -- that he was not interested in the question for its own sake. But if anything should happen at all, then the Slovaks must proclaim their independence as quickly as possible. There is no doubt that at the time we expected an action by Hungary. It is, however, correct ...

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: You can see how very anxious the Slovaks seemed to be for independence and what action Hitler and yourself were taking to secure it, if you try to find it, it will probably be at Page 67; it is at the end of a paragraph beginning, "Now he has permitted Minister Tiso to come here... "

And just below the middle of that paragraph, Hitler is reported as saying that he would not tolerate that internal instability and he had for that reason permitted Tiso to come in order to hear his

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decision. It was not a question of days but of hours. He stated at that time that, if Slovakia wished to make herself independent, he would support this endeavor and even guarantee it; he would stand by his words so long as Slovakia would make it clear that she wished for independence. If she hesitated or did not wish to dissolve the connection with Prague, he would leave the destiny of Slovakia to the mercy of the events for which he was no longer responsible.

Then in the next paragraph he asks you if you had anything to say and you are reported as saying (Document Number 2802-PS, Exhibit USA-117):

"The Reich Foreign Minister also emphasized for his part the view that in this case a decision was a question of hours and not of days. He showed Hitler a message he had just received which reported Hungarian troop movements on the Slovak frontier. The Fuehrer read this report and mentioned it to Tiso and expressed his hope that Slovakia would soon come to a clear decision."

Are you denying, Witness, that Hitler and you were putting the strongest possible pressure you could on the Slovaks to dissolve connections with Prague and so leave the Czechs standing alone to meet your pressure on Hacha which was coming in a couple of days?

VON RIBBENTROP: No, that is not correct. Very strong pressure was not used. There is no doubt that on the part of Hungary -- and my remark refers to the possibility of war-like developments with the Hungarians -- but wishes for independence had for a long time been conveyed to us again and again by the Slovaks. It is possible that, at the time, as the document shows, Tiso was hesitating, because after all it was an important step. But in view of the wish of the Fuehrer, which must have been obvious by then, to solve the question of Bohemia and Moravia in one way or another, it was in the interest of the Fuehrer to do his part to bring about the independence of Slovakia.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: One point. This is my last question before I come to the interview with President Hacha. Don't you remember that 2 days before Herr Burckel -- that is in my recollection -- Herr Burckel and another Austrian National Socialist, the Defendant Seyss-Inquart and a number of German officers, at about 10 in the evening of Saturday, the 11th of March, went into a Cabinet meeting at Bratislava and told the *soi-disant* Slovak Government that they should proclaim the independence of Slovakia? Don't you know that? It was reported by our consul.

VON RIBBENTROP: I do not recall it in detail, but I believe that something of the kind took place but I do not know exactly what it

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was. I believe that it was directed by the Fuehrer. I had, I believe, less to do with that. I no longer recall that exactly.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: I will deal very shortly ...

THE PRESIDENT: Sir David, it is a quarter to 1 now. We had better adjourn until 2.

[The Tribunal recessed until 1400 hours.]

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Afternoon Session

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Witness, you were present at the interview between President Hacha and Hitler on 15 March 1939, were you not?

VON RIBBENTROP: Yes, I was present.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Do you remember Hitler's saying at that interview that he had given the order for German troops to march into Czechoslovakia, and that at 6 o'clock in the morning the German Army would invade Czechoslovakia from all sides?

VON RIBBENTROP: I do not recall the exact words, but I know that Hitler told Hacha that he would occupy the countries of Bohemia and Moravia.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Do you remember his saying what I put to you, that he had given the order for German troops to march into Czechoslovakia?

VON RIBBENTROP: Yes, that is what I just said.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Do you remember the Defendant Goering, as he told the Tribunal, telling President Hacha that he would order the German Air Forces to bomb Prague?

VON RIBBENTROP: I cannot say anything about that in detail, because at that discussion I was not ...

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: I am not asking you for a detailed statement; I am asking you if you remember what I should suppose was a rather remarkable statement, that the Defendant Goering said to President Hacha that he would order the German Air Force to bomb Prague if Czech resistance was not called off. Do you remember that?

VON RIBBENTROP: No, I do not know that; I was not present.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: You were there during the whole interview, were you not?

VON RIBBENTROP: No, I was not. If the British Prosecutor will give me a chance I shall explain how it was.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: I want you to answer my question at the moment. You say you do not remember that. At any rate, if the Defendant Goering said that he said it, would you accept that it happened?

VON RIBBENTROP: If Goering says so, then it must, of course, be true. I have merely stated that I was not present during that conference between President Hacha and the then Reich Marshal Goering.

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SIR DAVID ALAXWtLL-FYFE: Do you remember Hitler saying that within 2 days the Czech Army would not exist any more?

VON RIBBENTROP: I do not recall that in detail, no; it was a very long conference.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Do you remember Hitler saying that at 6 o'clock the troops would march in? He was almost ashamed to say that there was one German division to each Czech battalion.

VON RIBBENTROP: It is possible that something like that was said. However, I do not remember the details.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: If these things were said, will you agree with me that the most intolerable pressure was put on President Hacha?

VON RIBBENTROP: Undoubtedly Hitler used very clear language. However, to that I must add that President Hacha, on his part, had come to Berlin in order to find a solution, together with Hitler. He was surprised that troops were to march into Czechoslovakia. That I know, and I remember it exactly. But he agreed to it eventually and then contacted his government and his chief of staff, so that there would be no hostile reception for the German troops. He then concluded with Hitler, with the Czech Foreign Minister and me, the agreement which I had drafted.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Will you agree with me that that agreement was obtained through a threat of aggressive action by the German Army and Air Force?

VON RIBBENTROP: It is certain, since the Fuehrer told President Hacha that the German Army would march in, that naturally, this instrument was written under that impression. That is correct.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Dont you think you could answer one of my question directly? I will ask it again. Will you agree with me that that document was obtained by the most intolerable pressure and threat of aggression? That is a simple question. Do you agree?

VON RIBBENTROP: In that way, no.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: What further pressure could you put on the head of a country except to threaten him that your army would march in, in overwhelming strength, and your Air Force would bomb his capital?

VON RIBBENTROP: War, for instance.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: What is that but war? Do you not consider it war that the Army would march in with a proportion of a division over a battalion, and that the Air Force would bomb Prague?

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VON RIBBENTROP: President Hacha had told the Fuehrer, that he would place the fate of his country in the Fuehrer's hands, and the Fuehrer had...

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: I want you to answer my question. My question is a perfectly simple one, and I want your answer to it. You have told us that that agreement was obtained after these threats were made.

VON RIBBENTROP: No, I did not say that.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Yes, that is what you said a moment ago.

VON RIBBENTROP: No.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: I put to you that that agreement was obtained by threat of war. Is that not so?

VON RIBBENTROP: I believe that this threat is incomparably lighter than the threats under which Germany stood for years through the [Versailles Treaty](#) and its sanctions.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Well, leaving whatever it is comparatively, will you now answer my question? Do you agree that that agreement was obtained by threat of war?

VON RIBBENTROP: It was obtained under a pressure, that is under the pressure of the march into Prague; there is no doubt about that. However, the decisive point of the whole matter was that the Fuehrer explained to President Hacha the reasons why he had to do this, and eventually Hacha agreed fully, after he had consulted his government and his general staff and heard their opinion. However, it is absolutely correct that the Fuehrer was resolved to solve this question under any circumstances. The reason was, that the Fuehrer was of the opinion that in the remainder of Czechoslovakia there was a conspiracy against the German Reich; Reich Marshal Goering had already stated that Russian commissions were said to have been at Czech airdromes. Consequently the Fuehrer acted as he did because he believed that it was necessary in the highest interest and for the protection of the German Reich. I might draw a comparison: For instance, President Roosevelt declared an interest in the Western Hemisphere; England has extended her interest over the entire globe. I think, that the interest which the Fuehrer showed in the remainder of Czechoslovakia was, as such, not unreasonable for a great power; about the methods one may think as one pleases. At any rate one thing is certain, and that is that these countries were occupied without a single drop of blood being shed.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: They were occupied without a single drop of blood being shed because you had threatened to march in overwhelming strength and to bomb Prague if they didn't agree, isn't that so?

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VON RIBBENTROP: No, not because we had threatened with superiority, but because we had agreed beforehand that the Germans could march in unimpeded.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: I put it to you again, that the agreement was obtained, however, by your threatening to march in and threatening to bomb Prague, was it not?

VON RIBBENTROP: I have already told you once that it was not so, but that the Fuehrer had talked to President Hacha about it and told him that he would march in. The conversation between President Hacha and Goering is not known to me. President Hacha signed the agreement after he had consulted his government and his general staff in Prague by telephone. There is no doubt that the personality of the Fuehrer, his reasoning, and finally the announced entry of the German troops induced President Hacha to sign the agreement.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Don't you remember -- would you mind standing up, General, for a second? [*A Czechoslovakian Army officer arose.*] Don't you remember that General Ecer asked you some questions once, this general from Czechoslovakia?

VON RIBBENTROP: Yes, certainly.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Did you say to him that you thought that this action on the 15th of March was contrary to the declaration of Hitler given to Chamberlain but, in fact, that Hitler saw in the occupation a vital necessity for Germany?

VON RIBBENTROP: Yes, that is correct. I was wrong in the first point; I will admit that openly; I remembered it afterward. In the Munich Agreement between Hitler and Chamberlain nothing like that is contained. It was not intended as a violation of that agreement. In the second place, I think I stated that Hitler believed he had to act that way in the interest of his country.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Now, I just want you to tell us one or two general things about your views with regard to Great Britain. Is it correct that when you went to London as Ambassador of the Reich you thought there was very little chance of an agreement, in fact that it was a hundred-to-one chance of getting an understanding with Great Britain?

VON RIBBENTROP: When I asked the Fuehrer to send me to London personally ...

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Here is a simple question I am asking you: Is it right th4t when you went to London as Ambassador you thought there was very little chance of an understanding with England, in fact, that the chance was a hundred-to-one?

VON RIBBENTROP: Yes, the chances were not good.

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SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: These, as you know, are your own words...

VON RIBBENTROP: I would like to add something.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: First answer my question. These are your own words, aren't they, that the chance was a hundred-to-one? Do you remember saying that?

VON RIBBENTROP: A hundred-to-one? I do not remember that, but I want to add something. I told Hitler that the chance was very small; and I also told him that I would try everything to bring about an Anglo-German understanding in spite of the odds.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Now, when you left England did you believe that war was inevitable? When you left England, when you ceased being ambassador, did you believe that war was unavoidable?

VON RIBBENTROP: No, I was not of the opinion that it was inevitable, but that, considering the developments which were taking place in England, a possibility of war existed, of that I was convinced.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: I want you to be careful about this. Did you say that you didn't think war was unavoidable when you left England?

VON RIBBENTROP: I can neither say that it was unavoidable nor that it was avoidable; at any rate, it was clear to me that with the development of the policy towards Germany which was taking place in England, an armed conflict might lie in the realm of possibility.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Now, look at page 211-E of the document book; English book, 170.

VON RIBBENTROP: Did you say 211?

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Have you got that?

VON RIBBENTROP: Yes, I have.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Now will you look at the second paragraph? It reads like this:

"He, the RAM (Reich Foreign Minister), had been more than skeptical even on his arrival in London and had considered the chances for an understanding as a hundred-to-one. The warmongers' clique in England had won the upper hand. When he (the RAM) left England, war was unavoidable." (Document Number 1834-PS)

Is that what you said to Ambassador Oshima?

VON RIBBENTROP: I do not know whether I said exactly that; at any rate, that is diplomatic language, Mr. Prosecutor, and it is quite possible that we at that time, as a result of the situation, in

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consultation with the Japanese ambassador, considered it opportune to express it that way. At any rate, that is not the important point; the important thing is that as I remember, when I left England a certainty and inevitability of war did not exist. Whether in later years I said this or that has no bearing on what I said when I left London. I do not think that there is the least bit of evidence for that. Perhaps I tried to draw him into the war against England and therefore used forceful language.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: As you said "no," just look at Document Number TC-75, Exhibit GB-28, and at your conclusions that are to be drawn. You will see it at the end under Number 5, "Therefore, conclusions to be drawn by us..." It is about the end of the third page:

"5) Therefore, conclusions to be drawn by us:

"1) Outwardly further understanding with England while protecting the interest of our friends;

"2) Formation, under great secrecy but with all persistence, of a coalition against England, that is, in practice a tightening of our friendship with Italy and Japan, also the winning over of all nations whose interests conform with ours, directly or indirectly; close and confidential co-operation of the diplomats of the three great powers towards this purpose."

And the last sentence:

"Every day on which -- no matter what tactical interludes of rapprochement towards us are attempted -- our political considerations are not guided fundamentally by the thought of England as our most dangerous adversary, would be a gain for our enemies."

Why did you tell the Tribunal a minute ago that you had not advised the Fuehrer that there should be outward friendly relations and in actuality a coalition against her?

VON RIBBENTROP: I do not know what kind of a document that is at all. May I see it?

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: It is signed by yourself on the 2d of January 1938. It is your own report to the Fuehrer.

VON RIBBENTROP: Yes, that is quite correct as such; that is the conclusive statement: Only thus can we, some day, come to an agreement or to a conflict with England. The situation at that time was clearly this, that England was resisting the German wishes for a revision which the Fuehrer had declared vital and that only through a strong diplomatic coalition did it seem possible to induce England, by diplomatic and not by bellicose means.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: You probably told him what was untrue?

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VON RIBBENTROP: I do not know, and I also do not know whether the details have been recorded accurately. It is a long record; I do not know where it comes from.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: It is your own record of the meeting, from captured German documents.

VON RIBBENTROP: That is quite possible, but many things are said in diplomacy every word of which is not weighed carefully. At any rate, the truth is that when I left London there was no certainty that the war was inevitable, but there is no doubt that I was skeptical when I left London and did not

know in what direction things would be drifting, particularly on account of the very strong prowar party in England.

THE PRESIDENT: Defendant, will you speak a little bit more slowly?

VON RIBBENTROP: Yes, Sir.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Now, when you left England, was it not your view that the German policy should be pretended friendliness toward England and actual formation of a coalition against her?

VON RIBBENTROP: Put this way, that is not correct. It was clear to me, when I became Foreign Minister, that the realization of the German desires in Europe was difficult and that it was principally England who opposed them. I had tried for years, by order of the Fuehrer, to achieve these things by means of a friendly understanding with England.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: I want you now to answer my question: Did you advise the Fuehrer that the proper policy was pretended friendliness with England and in actuality the formation of a coalition against her? Did you or did you not?

VON RIBBENTROP: No, that is not the right way of putting it to agree to these German aspirations. That without doubt, was the situation.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: I want to know, Witness, why you told the Tribunal 5 minutes ago that you had not advised Hitler in the sense in which I put to you?

VON RIBBENTROP: Which advice do you mean?

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Outwardly an understanding with England and formation under great secrecy of a coalition against her. I put that to you twice and you denied it, I want to know why you did deny it.

VON RIBBENTROP: I said quite clearly that England was resisting the German requests and that therefore, if Germany wanted

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to realize these aspirations, she could do nothing but find friends and bring England with the help of those friends to the conference table so that England would yield to these aspirations by diplomatic means. That was my task at that time.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Now I want you to direct your attention to the relations with Poland. I will give you the opportunity of answering a question generally, and I hope in that way we may save time.

Will you agree that up to the Munich Agreement, the speeches of all German statesmen were full of the most profound affection and respect for Poland? Do you agree with that?

VON RIBBENTROP: Yes.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: What was the purpose of what is shown in the Foreign Office memorandum of 26 August 1938? I will give you the page number, Page 107 of your document book. I want you to look at it. I think it is the fourth paragraph, beginning, "This method of approach towards Czechoslovakia..."; and you may take it from me that the method of approach was putting forward the idea that you and Hitler wanted the return of all Germans to the Reich. I put it quite fairly and objectively. That is what preceded it. I want you to look at that paragraph.

VON RIBBENTROP: Which paragraph do you mean? I did not hear.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: The fourth, "This method of approach towards Czechoslovakia..." it begins. The fourth on my copy.

VON RIBBENTROP: I have not found it yet. Paragraph 5, yes, I have it.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE:

"This method of approach towards Czechoslovakia is to be recommended also because of our relationship with Poland. The turning away of Germany from the boundary question of the southeast and her changeover to those of the east and northeast must inevitably put the Poles on the alert. After the liquidation of the Czechoslovakian question, it will be generally assumed that Poland will be the next in turn; but the later this assumption becomes a factor in international politics, the better." (Document Number TC-76)

Does that correctly set out the endeavors of German foreign policy at that time?

VON RIBBENTROP: Undoubtedly no, for, first of all, I do not know what kind of a document it is. It has apparently been prepared

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by some official in the Foreign Office where sometimes such theoretical treatises were prepared and may have come to me through the State Secretary. However, I do not remember having read it. Whether it reached me, I cannot tell you at the moment; but it is possible that such thoughts prevailed among some of our officials. That is quite possible.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: I see. Now, if you do not agree, would you look at Page 110, on which you will find extracts from Hitler's Reichstag speech on 26 September 1938. I am sorry. I said Reichstag; I meant Sportpalast.

VON RIBBENTROP: Sportpalast, yes.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: At the end of this extract the Fuehrer is quoted as saying with regard to Poland, after a tribute to Marshal Pilsudski:

"We are all convinced that this agreement will bring lasting pacification. We realize that here are two peoples who must live together and neither of whom can do away with the other. A people of 33 millions will always strive for an outlet to the sea. A way to

understanding, then, had to be found. It has been found, and it will be continually extended further. Certainly, things were difficult for this area. The nationalities and small groups frequently quarreled among themselves, but the decisive fact is that the two Governments and all reasonable and clear-sighted persons among the two peoples and in the two countries possess the firm will and determination to improve their relations. This is a real work of peace, of more value than all of the idle talk at the League of Nations Palace in Geneva." (Document Number TC-73, Number 42)

Do you think that is an honest statement of opinion?

VON RIBBENTROP: Yes, I believe that that was definitely the Fuehrer's view at the time.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: And so at that time all the questions of the treatment of minorities in Poland were very unimportant; is that so?

VON RIBBENTROP: No, they were not unimportant. They were a latent and even difficult point between Poland and ourselves, and the purpose of that particular kind of statement by the Fuehrer was to overcome it. I am so familiar with the problem of the minorities in Poland because I watched it for personal reasons for many years. From the time I took over the Foreign Ministry, there were again and again the greatest difficulties which, however, were always settled on our part in the most generous way.

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SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: At any rate you have agreed with me that the speeches at that time -- and you say quite honestly -- were full of praise and affection for the Poles; is that right?

VON RIBBENTROP: Yes, we were hoping that thereby we could bring the German minority problem, in particular, to a satisfactory and sensible solution. That had been our policy since 1934.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Well, now, immediately after Munich you first raised the question of Danzig with M. Lipski, I think, in October, around 21 October.

VON RIBBENTROP: Right, 28 October.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: 28 October. And the Poles had replied on the 31st; it may have reached you a day later through M. Lipski, suggesting the making of a bilateral agreement between Germany and Poland, but saying the return of Danzig to the Reich would lead to a conflict. I put it quite generally. I just wanted to remind you of the tenor of the reply. Do you remember?

VON RIBBENTROP: According to my recollection it was not quite like that. The Fuehrer had charged me -- it was on 28 October, to be exact -- to request Ambassador Lipski to come to Berchtesgaden. His order was given because the Fuehrer in particular, perhaps as a sequel to the speech in the Sportpalast, but that I do not remember, wanted to bring about a clarification of the relations with all his neighbors. He wanted that now particularly with respect to Poland. He instructed me, therefore, to discuss with Ambassador Lipski the question of Danzig and the question of a connection between the Reich and East Prussia.

I asked Ambassador Lipski to come and see me, and stated these wishes in a very friendly atmosphere. Ambassador Lipski was very reserved; he stated that after all Danzig was not a simple problem but that he would discuss the question with his government. I asked him to do so soon and inform me of the outcome. That was the beginning of the negotiations with Poland.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Well, now, if you will turn -- I do not want to stop you, but I want to get on quickly over this matter -- if you will turn to Page 114, you will find the minutes of M. Beck's conversation with Hitler on 5 January. I just want to draw your attention to the last paragraph, where, after M. Beck had said that the Danzig question was a very difficult problem:

"In answer to this the Chancellor stated that to solve this problem it would be necessary to try to find something quite new, some new formula, for which he used the term 'Korperschaft,' which on the one hand would safeguard the interest of the German population and on the other hand the Polish interest. In addition the Chancellor declared that the Minister

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could be quite at ease; there would be no fait accompli in Danzig and nothing would be done to render difficult the situation of the Polish Government." (Document TC-73, Number 48)

Do you see that, before I ask you the question?

VON RIBBENTROP: Yes, I have read that.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Just look at the summary of your own conversation with M. Beck on the next day. It is Page 115, at the beginning of the paragraph, the second paragraph. You will see that, after M. Beck had mentioned the Danzig question, you said, "In answer, Herr Von Ribbentrop once more emphasized that Germany was not seeking any violent solution." (Document TC-73, Number 49). That was almost word for word what Hitler had said the day before; do you see that?

VON RIBBENTROP: Yes.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Now, turn back to Page 113. (Document Number C-137, Exhibit GB-33) These are the Defendant Keitel's orders to -- or rather, to put it exactly -- the Defendant Keitel's transmission of the Fuehrer's order with regard to Danzig. It is dated 24 November. That was some 6 weeks before, and it is supplementary to an order of 21 October, and you see what it says:

"Apart from the three contingencies mentioned in the instructions of 21 October, preparations are also to be made to enable the Free State of Danzig to be occupied by German troops by surprise. ('4. Occupation of Danzig').

"The preparations will be made on the following basis. The condition is a *coup de main* occupation of Danzig, exploiting a politically favorable situation, not a war against Poland." (Document Number C-137)

Did you know of these instructions?

VON RIBBENTROP: No, I did not know that. This is the first time that I have seen that order or whatever it may be. May I add something?

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Not for the moment. Hitler must have known of the order, mustn't he? It is an order of the Fuehrer?

VON RIBBENTROP: Yes, of course, and therefore I assume -- that is what I wanted to add -- that the British Prosecution are aware that political matters and military matters are in this case two completely different conceptions. There is no doubt that the Fuehrer, in view of the permanent difficulties in Danzig and the Corridor; had given military orders of some kind -- just in case -- and I can

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well imagine that it is one of these orders. I see it today for the first time.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Supposing that you had known of the orders, Witness, would you still have said on the 5th of January that Germany was not seeking a fait accompli or a violent solution? If you had known of that order would you still have said it?

VON RIBBENTROP: If I had known this order and considering it an order of the General Staff for possible cases, as I am compelled to do, then I would still continue to have the same opinion. I think it is part of the General Staff's duty to take into consideration all possible eventualities and prepare for them in principle. In the final analysis that has nothing to do with politics.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Nothing to do with politics to. have a cut-and-dried plan how the Free State of Danzig is to be occupied by German troops by surprise when you are telling the Poles that you won't have a fait accompli? That is your idea of how matters should be carried on? If it is I will leave it.

VON RIBBENTROP: No, I must rather add that I know that the Fuehrer was alarmed for a long time, particularly during 1939, lest a sudden Polish attack take place against Danzig; so that to me, I am not a military man, it appears quite natural to make some preparations for all such problems and possibilities. But, of course, I cannot judge the details of these orders.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Now, when did you learn that Hitler was determined to attack Poland?

VON RIBBENTROP: That Hitler contemplated a military action against Poland, I learned for the first time, as I remember, in August 1939. That, of course, he had made certain military preparations in advance to meet any eventuality becomes clear from this order regarding Danzig. But I definitely did not learn about this order, and I do not recollect now in detail whether I received at that time any military communication. I do remember that I knew virtually nothing about it.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Do you tell the Tribunal that you did not know in May that Hitler's real view was that Danzig was not the subject of the dispute at all, but that his real object was the acquisition of Lebensraum in the East?

VON RIBBENTROP: No, I did not know it in that sense. The Fuehrer talked sometimes about living space, that is right, but I did not know that he had the intention to attack Poland.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Well now, just look at Page 117, or it may be 118, of your document. On Page 117 you will find the

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minutes of the conference on the 23rd day of May 1939 at the new Reich Chancellery.

VON RIBBENTROP: Did you say 117?

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: 117. I want you to look at it. It may be on Page 118, and it begins with the following words:

"Danzig is not the subject of the dispute at all; it is a question of expanding our Lebensraum in the East and of securing our food supplies and of the settlement of the Baltic problem. Food supplies can be expected only from thinly populated areas. Added to the natural fertility, the German, through cultivation, will enormously increase the surplus. There is no other possibility for Europe." (Document Number L-79)

Are you telling the Tribunal that Hitler never explained that view to you?

VON RIBBENTROP: It may be strange to say so, but I should like to say first that it looks as though I was not present during this conference. That was a military conference, and the Fuehrer used to hold these military conferences quite separately from the political conferences. The Fuehrer did now and then mention that we had to have Lebensraum; but I knew nothing, and he never told me anything at that time, that is in May 1939, of an intention to attack Poland. Yes, I think this was kept back deliberately, as had been done in other cases, because he always wanted his diplomats to stand wholeheartedly for a diplomatic solution and to bring it about.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: You mean to say that Hitler was deliberately keeping you in the dark as to his real aims; that Danzig was not the subject of dispute and what he really wanted was Lebensraum; is that your story?

VON RIBBENTROP: Yes, I assume that he did that deliberately because ...

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Well now, just look at the very short paragraph a little further on where he says:

"There is no question of sparing Poland, and we are left with no alternative but to attack Poland at the first suitable opportunity. We cannot expect a repetition of the Czech affair. There will be fighting. The task is to isolate Poland."

Do you tell the Tribunal that he never said that to his Foreign Minister?

VON RIBBENTROP: I did not quite understand that question.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: It is a perfectly simple one. Do you tell the Tribunal that Hitler never mentioned what I have just read from his speech, that there is to be no question of sparing Poland, that you had to attack Poland at the first opportunity, and

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your task was to isolate Poland? Are you telling the Tribunal that Hitler never mentioned that to his Foreign Minister, who would have the practical conduct of foreign policy?

VON RIBBENTROP: No, he did not do that at that time; but, according to my recollection, only much later, in the summer of 1939. At that time he did say that he was resolved -- and he said literally -- to solve the problem one way or another.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: And do you say that you didn't know in May that Hitler wanted war?

VON RIBBENTROP: That he wanted what?

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: You didn't know in May that Hitler wanted war?

VON RIBBENTROP: No, I was not convinced of that at all.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: It is quite clear from the document that he did want war, isn't it?

VON RIBBENTROP: This document, no doubt, shows the intention of an action against Poland, but I know that Hitler often used strong language to his military men, that is, he spoke as though he had the firm intention of attacking a certain country in some way, but whether he actually would have carried it out later politically is an entirely different question. I know that he repeatedly told me that one had to talk with military men as if war was about to break out here or there on the next day.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Now, I want to ask you about another point. You said on Friday that you had never expressed the view that Great Britain would stay out of war and would fail to honor her guarantee to Poland. Do you remember saying that?

VON RIBBENTROP: Yes.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Is that true?

VON RIBBENTROP: Yes.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Well now, I would just like you to look at one or two other documents. Do you remember on the 29th of April 1939 receiving the Hungarian Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister at 3:30 in the afternoon?

VON RIBBENTROP: No, I do not remember that.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Well, we have the minutes of your meeting signed by Von Erdmannsdorff, I think. Did you say this to the Hungarian Prime Minister and Foreign Minister:

"The Reich Foreign Minister added that it was his firm conviction that, no matter what happened in Europe, no French or English soldier would attack Germany. Our relations with Poland were gloomy at the moment."

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Did you say that?

VON RIBBENTROP: I do not think I ever said that. I consider that impossible.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Well, if you got a copy ...

VON RIBBENTROP: May I perhaps have a look at the document?

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Yes, certainly, with pleasure. This will become Exhibit GB-289, Document D-737.

VON RIBBENTROP: I cannot, of course, tell you now in detail that I said at that time, but it may be possible that there was an effort at that time to reassure the Hungarians who were probably concerned about the Polish problem; that is absolutely possible. But I hardly believe that I said anything like this. However, it is certain that the Fuehrer knew, and I had told the Fuehrer that England would inarch to the aid of Poland.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: If you are a little doubtful would you look at Document Number D-738, which will be Exhibit GB-290. Apparently you saw these gentlemen again 2 days later. Just look at the last sentence of that:

"He (the Reich Foreign Minister) pointed out again that Poland presented no military problem for us. In case of a military clash the British would coldly leave the Poles in the lurch."

That is quite straight speaking, isn't it, "The British would coldly leave the Poles in the lurch"?

VON RIBBENTROP: I do not know on just what page that is.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: It is Paragraph 7, and it is the report of the 1st of May, the last sentence of my quotation. It is signed by a gentleman called Von Erdmannsdorff; it appears above his signature. The words I am asking you about are, "In case of a military clash the British would coldly leave the Poles in the lurch."

VON RIBBENTROP: Is that on Page 8 or where? On what page, if I may ask?

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: My heading is Paragraph 7. It begins:

"The Reich Foreign Minister then returned to our attitude towards the Polish question and pointed out that the Polish attitude had aroused great bitterness."

VON RIBBENTROP: It is perfectly conceivable that I said something like that, and if it has been said it was done in order not to alarm the Hungarians and to keep them on our side. It is quite clear that that is nothing but diplomatic talk.

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SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Don't you think there is any requirement to tell the truth in a political conversation?

VON RIBBENTROP: That was not the point; the point was to bring about a situation which made it possible to solve this and the Polish question in a diplomatic way. If I were to tell the Hungarians today, and this applies to the Italians also, that England would assist Poland and that a great war would result, then this would create a diplomatic situation which would make it impossible to solve the problem at all. There is no doubt that during the entire time I had to use very strong language, just as the Fuehrer had always ordered, for if his own Foreign Minister had hinted at other possibilities, it would naturally have been very difficult, and I venture to say, it would have meant that this would, in any case, have led to war. But we wanted to create a strong German position so that we could solve this problem peacefully. I may add that the Hungarians were somewhat worried with regard to the German policy, and that the Fuehrer had told me from the start to use particularly clear and strong language on these subjects. I used that kind of language also quite frequently to my own diplomats for the same reasons.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: You want us to assume that you were telling lies to the Hungarians but you are telling the truth to this Tribunal. That is what it comes to shortly, isn't it? That is what you want us to understand -- that you were telling lies to the Hungarians but you are telling the truth to this Tribunal. That is what you want us to understand isn't it?

VON RIBBENTROP: I do not know whether one can talk of lies in this case, Mr. Prosecutor. This is a question of diplomacy; and if we wanted to create a strong position, then of course we could not go beating about the bush. Consider what the impression would have been if the German Foreign Minister had spoken as if at the slightest German step the whole world would attack Germany! The Fuehrer used frequently such strong language and expected me to do the same. I want to emphasize again that often I had to use such language, even to my own Foreign Office, so that there was no misunderstanding. If the Fuehrer was determined on the solution of a problem, no matter what the circumstances, even at the risk of war if it had to be, our only chance to succeed was to adopt a firm stand, for had we failed to do that, war would have been inevitable.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Well now, I want you to have in mind what Count Ciano says that you said to him on, I think the 11th or 12th of August, just before your meeting at, I think it was at Salzburg, with you and Hitler. You remember that according to Count Ciano's diary he said that he

asked you, "What do you want, the Corridor or Danzig?" and that you looked at him and said, "Not any more; we want war." Do you remember that?

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VON RIBBENTROP: Yes, that is absolutely untrue. I told Count Ciano at that time, this is on the same line, "the Fuehrer is determined to solve the Polish problem one way or another." This was what the Fuehrer had instructed me to say. That I am supposed to have said "we want war" is absurd for the simple reason that, it is clear to every diplomat, those things are just not said, not even to the very best and most trusted ally, but most certainly not to Count Ciano.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: I should just like you to look at a report of the subsequent conversation that you had with Mussolini and Count Ciano not very long after, on the 10th of March 1940, that is, about 9 months later. If you look at Document Number 2835-PS, which will become Exhibit GB-291, and if you will turn to, I think it is Page 18 or 19 ...

VON RIBBENTROP: You mean Page 18?

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: I remind you again, a conversation between you and Mussolini and Ciano on the 10th of March 1940. It begins by saying:

"The Reich Foreign Minister recalled that he actually had stated in Salzburg to Count Ciano that he did not believe that England and France would assist Poland without further questions, but that at all times he had reckoned with the possibility of intervention by the Western Powers. He was glad now about the course of events, because, first of all, it had always been clear that the clash would have to come sooner or later and that it was inevitable."

And then you go on to say that it would be a good thing to finish the conflict in the lifetime of the Fuehrer.

VON RIBBENTROP: Yes, that was after the outbreak of war; is that it?

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Yes. What I am putting to you are these words:

"He was glad now about the course of events, because, first of all, it had always been clear that the clash would have to come sooner or later and that it was inevitable."

And if you will look at where it says "secondly"...

VON RIBBENTROP: May I reply to that?

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Yes; but what I am suggesting to you is that that shows perfectly clearly that Count Ciano is right, and that you were very glad that the war had come, because you thought this was an appropriate time for it to happen.

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VON RIBBENTROP: No, I do not agree. On the contrary, it says here also "that at all times he had reckoned with the possibility of intervention by the Western Powers." It says so here quite clearly.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: But it is the second part that I am putting to you. I pass from that point about British intervention. I say, "he was glad now about the course of events," and if you will look down at the paragraph where it says "secondly," so that you will have it in mind, the third line says:

"Secondly, at the moment when England introduced general conscription it was clear that the ratio of war strength would not develop in the long run in favor of Germany and Italy."

VON RIBBENTROP: May I ask where it says that?

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: A few lines further down. The word "secondly" is underlined, isn't it?

VON RIBBENTROP: No, it is not here. Yes, I have it.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: "Secondly, at the moment when England introduced general conscription..." It is about 10 lines further on.

VON RIBBENTROP: Yes, what does the British Prosecutor try to prove with that; I do not quite understand?

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: I want you to look at the next sentence before you answer my question.

"This, along with the other things, was decisive for the Fuehrer's decision to solve the Polish question, even under the danger of intervention by the Western Powers. The deciding fact was, however, that a great power could not take certain things lying down."

What I am saying...

VON RIBBENTROP: Yes, that appears correct to me.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: And that was your view at the time and the view that you declared afterwards as being your view, that you were determined that you would solve the Polish question even if it meant war? Count Ciano was perfectly right in saying that you wanted war. That is what I am putting to you.

VON RIBBENTROP: No; that is not correct. I told Count Ciano at the time at Berchtesgaden that the Fuehrer was determined to solve the problem one way or another. It was necessary to put it in that way because the Fuehrer was convinced that whatever became known to Rome would go to London and Paris at once. He wanted therefore to have clear language used so that Italy would be on our side diplomatically. If the Fuehrer or myself had said that the Fuehrer was not so determined to solve that problem, then it would have

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been without doubt passed on immediately. But since the Fuehrer was determined to solve the problem, if necessary by war if it could not be solved any other way, this would have meant war, which explains the clear and firm diplomatic attitude which I had to adopt at that time in Salzburg. But I do not know in what way this is contradictory to what is being said here.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: I want you to pass on to the last week in August and take that again very shortly, because there is a lot of ground to cover.

You agreed in your evidence that on the 25th of August the Fuehrer called off the attack which was designed for the morning of the 26th. You remember that? I just want you to have the dates in mind.

VON RIBBENTROP: I know that date very well.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: You were here in court the day Dahlerus gave his evidence, were you not?

VON RIBBENTROP: Yes, I was here.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: And let me remind you of the date, that on the evening of the 24th the Defendant Goering asked Herr Dahlerus to go to London the next morning to carry forward a preliminary outline of what the Fuehrer was going to say to Sir Neville Henderson on the 25th. So you remember that was his evidence? And on the 25th, at 1:30 ...

VON RIBBENTROP: I do not recall the dates exactly, but I suppose they are correct.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: I know these dates pretty well, and the Tribunal will correct me if I am wrong, but I am giving them as I have looked them up. That was the night of the 24th; Dahlerus left on the morning of the 25th, and then at 1:30 on the 25th -- you said about noon, I am not quarreling with you for a matter of minutes -- midday on the 25th the Fuehrer saw Sir Neville Henderson...

VON RIBBENTROP: Yes, that is right.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: And gave him what is called a *note verbale*, that is, an inquiry in general terms.

VON RIBBENTROP: No, it was given to him in the evening. At noon he had only talked to him and in the evening I had Minister Schmidt take the *note verbale* to him, I think that is the way it was, with a special message in which I asked him again to impress upon his Government how serious the Fuehrer was about this message or offer. I think that is contained in the *British Blue Book*.

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SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Whenever you gave him the actual note, Herr Hitler told him the general view in the oral conversation which he had with Sir Neville in the middle of the day?

VON RIBBENTROP: Yes, that is right.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: And the actual calling off of the attack on the morning of the 26th, as you have said, was not done until you had had the message from Signor Mussolini at about 3 o'clock, and the news that the Anglo-Polish formal agreement was going to be signed that evening about 4 o'clock. That is what you have said.

Now, the first point that I am putting to you is this: That at the time that Herr Dahlerus was sent, and the time of this note, when the words were spoken by the Fuehrer to Sir Nevile Henderson, it was the German intention to attack on the morning of the 26th; and what I suggest is that both the message to Herr Dahlerus and the words which were spoken to Sir Nevile Henderson were simply designed in order to trouble the British Government, in the hope that it might have some effect on them withdrawing from their aid to Poland; isn't that right?

VON RIBBENTROP: Do you want me to answer that?

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Certainly; I am asking you.

VON RIBBENTROP: The situation is that I am not familiar with the message of Dahlerus, I cannot say anything about it. Regarding the meeting between Hitler and Sir Nevile Henderson, I can say that I read the correspondence between Mr. Chamberlain and Hitler in the morning, I think it was dated the 22d, and somehow had arrived at a sort of deadlock. I talked to the Fuehrer afterwards, about whether or not another attempt should be made in order to arrive at some kind of a solution with England. Subsequently, towards noon, I think it was 1 or 2 o'clock, the Fuehrer met Sir Nevile Henderson in my presence and told him he should take a plane and fly to London in order to talk to the British Government as soon as possible. After the solution of the Polish problem he intended to approach England again with a comprehensive offer. He gave, I believe, a rough outline of the offer already in the note verbale; but I do not recall that exactly. Then Sir Nevile Henderson flew to London. While the Fuehrer was having that conversation, military measures were under way. I learned of that during the day, because Mussolini's refusal had arrived, I believe, not at 3 o'clock, but earlier in the course of the morning or at noon. Then at 4 or 5 in the afternoon I heard about the ratification of the Polish-British agreement. I went to the Fuehrer immediately and suggested to him to withdraw the military measures; and he did so after short deliberation. There is no doubt that in the meantime certain military

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measures had been taken. Just how far they went I regret not to be able to say. But when the Fuehrer sent that offer, that note verbale to England I was convinced and under the impression that if England would respond to it in some way, it would not come to an armed conflict, and that in this case the military measures which, I believe, were automatically put in effect, would somehow have been stopped later on. But I cannot say anything about that in detail. I recollect only one thing, and that is that when I received the note verbale from the Fuehrer, which I think was in the afternoon or in the evening, these measures had already either been stopped or were, at any rate, in the process of being stopped. I cannot

give it to you in chronological order at the moment. For that I have to have the pertinent documents which, unfortunately, are not at my disposal here. But one thing is certain, the offer of the Fuehrer to England was made in order to try once again to come to a solution of the Polish problem. When I saw the *note verbale* I even asked him, "How about the Polish solution?" and I still recollect that he said, "We will now send that note to the British, and if they respond to it then we can still see what to do, there will still be time."

At any rate, I believe, the military measures had either been stopped when the note was submitted, or they were stopped shortly after.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Now, you were not present at the meeting of the Fuehrer and his generals on the 22d of August, but you must have heard many times the account of it read out since this Trial started. You remember the Fuehrer is reported, according to minutes, to have said:

"I shall use propagandistic reasons for starting the war; never mind whether it be plausible or not. The victor shall not be asked later on whether he told the truth or not. In starting and making the war, not the right is what matters but victory."

(Document Number 1014-PS).

That is what was said at Obersalzberg. Has Hitler ever said anything like that to you?

VON RIBBENTROP: Did you say the 27th?

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: On the 22d. What I am asking you is, has Hitler said anything similar to that to you?

VON RIBBENTROP: No, at the meeting on the 22d, I was not present; I think I was on my way to Moscow.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: I said you were not present. That is why I put it in that way. Has he ever said anything similar to you? You say "no." Well, now, I want you to come to the 29th.

VON RIBBENTROP: May I say something about that?

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SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: No; if you say that he has not said it to you, I am not going to pursue it, because we must not waste too much time on each of these details. I want you to come to the 29th of August when you saw Sir Neville Henderson, and while accepting, with some reservations, the idea of direct negotiation with Poland, you said that it must be a condition of that negotiation that the Poles should send a plenipotentiary by the next day, by the 30th. You remember that?

VON RIBBENTROP: Yes, well, it was like this ...

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: I really do not want to stop you, but I do want to keep it short on this point.

VON RIBBENTROP: In that case I must say "no". May I make a statement?

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: I am sorry, because this is only preliminary. I thought it was common ground that you saw Sir Neville on the 29th, that you put a number of terms. One of the terms was that a Polish plenipotentiary should be present by the 30th. If you don't agree with that, please tell me if I am wrong, because it is my recollection of all documents.

VON RIBBENTROP: Yes, that is correct.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Now, on the 30th you have told us that your reason for not giving a copy of the terms to Sir Neville was, first, because Hitler had ordered you not to give a copy. And I think your reason given at the time was that the Polish plenipotentiary had not arrived, and therefore it was no good giving a copy of the terms. That's right, isn't it?

VON RIBBENTROP: Yes, that is correct.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Now, these terms that were given, that were read out by you, were not ready on the 29th, because in your communication demanding a plenipotentiary you said if he came on the 30th you would have the terms ready by that time. So may I take it that these terms were drawn up by Hitler with the help of the Foreign Office between the 29th and the 30th?

VON RIBBENTROP: He dictated them personally. I think there were 16 points, if I remember rightly.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Now, did you really expect after the treatment of Von Schuschnigg, of Tiso, of Hacha, that the Poles would be willing to send a fly into the spider's parlor?

VON RIBBENTROP: We certainly counted on it and hoped for it. I think that a hint from the British Government would have sufficed to bring that envoy to Berlin.

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SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE-: And what you hoped was to put the Poles in this dilemma, that either these terms would stand as a propagandistic cause for the war, to use Hitler's phrase -- or else you would be able, by putting pressure on the Polish plenipotentiary, to do exactly what you had done before with Schuschnigg and Tiso and Hacha, and get a surrender from the Poles. Wasn't that what was in your mind?

VON RIBBENTROP: No, the situation was different. I must say, that on the 29th the Fuehrer told the British Ambassador that he would draft these conditions or this agreement and by the time of the arrival of the Polish Plenipotentiary, would make them also available to the British Government -- or he hoped that this would be possible, I think that is what he said. Sir Neville Henderson took note of that, and I must repeat that the Fuehrer, after the British reply had been received on the 28th, once more, and in spite of the extremely tense situation between Poland and Germany, agreed to that kind of negotiation. The decisive thing in these crucial days of the 30th and 31st is, therefore, the following:

The Fuehrer had drafted these conditions, England knew that the possibility of arriving at a solution existed. All during the 30th of August we heard nothing from England, at least nothing definite. Only at midnight, I think, did the British Ambassador report for this discussion. In the meantime, I must mention that at 7 o'clock in the evening news of the general mobilization in Poland had been received, which excited the Fuehrer extremely. Through that, the situation had become extraordinarily acute. I still remember exactly the situation at the Chancellery where almost hourly reports were received about incidents, streams of refugees, and so forth. It was an atmosphere heavily charged with electricity. The Fuehrer waited all through the 30th; no definite answer arrived. Then, at midnight of the 30th, that conversation took place. The course of that conversation has already been described here by me and also by a witness, the interpreter Schmidt. I did more than I was allowed to do, in that I had read the entire contents to Sir Neville Henderson. I was hoping that England perhaps might do something yet. The Fuehrer had told Sir Neville Henderson that a Polish plenipotentiary would be treated on equal terms. Therefore, there was the possibility of meeting, somewhere at an appointed place, or, that someone would come to Berlin, or that the Polish Ambassador Lipski would be given the necessary authority. Those were the possibilities. I would even like to go further. It was merely necessary, during the 30th or the 31st, until late that night, or the next morning when the march began, for the Polish Ambassador Lipski to have authority at least to receive in his hands the German proposals. Had this been done, the diplomatic negotiations would in any case have been under way and thus the crisis would have been averted, at least for the time being.

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I also believe, and I have said so before, that there would have been no objections. I believe the Fuehrer would have welcomed, if the British Ambassador had intervened. The basis for the negotiations, I have also mentioned this here before, was called reasonable by Sir Neville Henderson personally. One hint from the British Government during the 30th or 31st, and negotiations would have been in course on the basis of these reasonable proposals of the Fuehrer, termed reasonable even by the British themselves. It would have caused no embarrassment to the Poles, and I believe that on the basis of these reasonable proposals, which were absolutely in accord with the Covenant of the League of Nations, which provided for a plebiscite in the Corridor area, a solution, perfectly acceptable for Poland, would have been possible.

THE PRESIDENT: The Tribunal will adjourn now for 10 minutes.

[A recess was taken.]

THE PRESIDENT: Defendant, the Tribunal desire me to say that they think that your answers and your explanations are too long, too argumentative, and too repetitive, and they are upon matters which have been gone over and over again before the Tribunal, so they would therefore ask you to try to keep your answers as short as possible.

VON RIBBENTROP: Yes.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Did I understand you correctly, Witness, on Friday, that you didn't know about the connection between Quisling and the Defendant [Rosenberg](#) in the spring and summer of 1939? It was well before the war, in the spring and summer, before June of 1939?

VON RIBBENTROP: Yes, that is correct. I knew that Rosenberg had friends in Norway and that the name of Quisling was mentioned, but this name meant nothing to me at that time. On the request of the Fuehrer, at that time I gave Rosenberg certain amountg of money for his friends in Norway, for newspapers, propaganda, and similar purposes.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: You didn't know, as I understand your testimony, that some of Quisling's men had been in a schooling camp in Germany in August of 1939, before the war?

VON RIBBENTROP: No I do not remember that. I learned of it here through a document. But I do not recall having known anything about it. At any rate, if I knew anything about it, I did not know any of the details.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Did you know that the Germans living in Norway had been used to enlarge and extend the

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staff of the various German official agencies, the legation and the consulates, soon after the beginning of the war?

VON RIBBENTROP: No, I do not remember that at the moment, at all. At that time I probably never did learn correctly about that, if that was the case.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL- FYFE: It is the quotation from the *Yearbook of the NSDAP*. All I want to know at the moment is whether or not you knew about that. If you say you did not...

VON RIBBENTROP: No, I do not know and cannot say a thing about it, I'm afraid...

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Did you know at the time, in December 1939, that Quisling had two interviews with Hitler on the 16th and 18th of December?

VON RIBBENTROP: No, I did not know that either. What was the date, may I ask?

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: 16th and 18th December 1939, through the Defendant Raeder.

VON RIBBENTROP: No, I knew nothing of these interviews, according to my recollection.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: So that practically the first matter that you knew about in regard to Norway was, first, when you got the letter from Raeder, dated the 3rd of April?

VON RIBBENTROP: No, I believe that was a letter from Keitel. I believe this is a misunderstanding.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: I beg your pardon. It is a mistake of mine. I am sorry. Do you remember a letter from Keitel, where he says:

"The military occupation of Denmark and Norway had been, by command of the Fuehrer, long in preparation by the High Command of the Wehrmacht. The High Command of the Wehrmacht had therefore ample time to deal with all questions connected with the carrying out of this operation."

So really, Witness -- I may perhaps be able to shorten the matter -- you are really not a very good person to ask about the earlier preparations with regard to Norway, because you weren't in on these earlier discussions with Quisling and with Raeder and Hitler. Is that right? If so, I will leave the subject.

VON RIBBENTROP: No, I was not in on these discussions. But I should like to clarify one thing briefly: that I received this letter -- why, I do not know -- only some days later. The first intimation of the intention to occupy Norway, due to the anticipated landing of the British, I received about 36 hours ahead of time

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from the Fuehrer. The letter was probably longer under way than it should have been. I saw it only afterwards,

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Then I shall not occupy time, because there is a good deal to cover, and I will take you straight to the question of the Low Countries. You have heard me read, and probably other people read, more than once, the statement of Hitler's on the 22d of August 1939:

"Another possibility is the violation of Dutch, Belgian, and Swiss neutrality. I have no doubt that all these states, as well as Scandinavia, will defend their neutrality by all available means. England and France will not violate the neutrality of these countries." (Document Number 798-PS)

That is what Hitler said on the 22d of August. You weren't there, and I ask you again if he expressed the same opinion to you?

VON RIBBENTROP: No, he did not.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Did you know that from a very early date, on the 7th of October 1939, an army group order was given that Army Group B is to make all preparations, according to special orders, for immediate invasion of Dutch and Belgian territory if the political situation so demands. Did you know of that order on the 7th of October?

VON RIBBENTROP: No; I believe I have seen it here; I did not know it before.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: And did you know that on the 9th of October Hitler issued a directive:

"A longer delay would not only result in the abandonment of Belgian, and perhaps also of Dutch neutrality in favor of the Western Powers, but would also serve to strengthen the military power of our enemies to an increasing degree, and would lessen the confidence of neutral states in final German victory. Preparations should be made for offensive action on

the northern flank of the Western Front, crossing the area of Luxembourg, Belgium, and Holland. This attack must be carried out as soon and as forcibly as possible." (Document Number C-62)

Did you know that Hitler issued that directive on the 9th of October?

VON RIBBENTROP: No, I did not know that.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: So that as far as you were concerned you are telling the Tribunal that Hitler gave his assurance, the many assurances, in August and October, without telling his Foreign Minister that on the 7th and 9th of October, he had given the directive for the attack on the Low Countries, that he did not

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tell you about his order or his directive for his attack on the Low Countries? Are you sure of that?

VONHIBBENTROP: I am pretty sure of that, otherwise I should recall it. I know one thing, that such ideas, as to whether or not an offensive should be assumed in the West, after the Polish Campaign, had occasionally been discussed, but I never heard about any orders.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: I see. If you say that is the state of your knowledge, we will pass on to something about which you did know a little bit more. Do you remember the meeting of Hitler and yourself with Ciano at Obersalzberg on the 12th of August 1939?

VON RIBBENTROP: Yes, I saw the document, the minutes, about it, here.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Well, then, I want you just to look at that document, and it is on Page 181. I want you to follow while I read one passage, which should be about 182. It is on my second page and it is a paragraph which begins, "As Poland makes it clear by her whole attitude that in case of conflict..."

VON RIBBENTROP: I have not found it yet.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Well, if you look for that "As Poland makes it clear by her whole attitude..."

VON RIBBENTROP: On Page 2?

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: It should be on Page 2, on my Page 2. It may be further on in yours.

VON RIBBENTROP: Is that the beginning of the paragraph?

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Yes. "As Poland makes it clear..." It is two paragraphs on from a single line that says at the point "Count Ciano, showed signs of..."

VON RI31BENTROP: I have found it, yes.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Would you look at the next sentence: "Generally speaking..." This is the next sentence but one:

"Generally speaking, it would be best to liquidate the pseudoneutrals one after the other. This could be done fairly easily if one Axis partner protected the rear of the other, who was just finishing off one of the uncertain neutrals, and vice versa. For Italy, Yugoslavia was to be considered such an uncertain neutral. At the visit of Prince Regent Paul, he, (the Fuehrer) had suggested, particularly in consideration of Italy, that Prince Paul clarify his political attitude towards the Axis by a gesture. He had thought of a closer connection

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with the Axis, and Yugoslavia's leaving the League of Nations. Prince Paul had agreed to the latter. Recently the Prince Regent had been in London and sought reassurance of the Western Powers. The same thing was repeated that had happened in the case of Gafencu, who had also been very reasonable during his visit to Germany, and had denied any interest in the aims of the Western democracies." (Document Number 1871-PS)

Now, that was Hitler's formulation of his policy, and may I take it that that was the policy which you were assisting to carry out, to liquidate the pseudo-neutrals one after the other, and include among these pseudo-neutrals Yugoslavia?

VON RIBBENTROP: No, that is not to be misunderstood in that way. I must state the following in this connection. The situation was this at that time: Hitler wanted under all circumstances to keep Italy on our side. Italy was always a very unreliable partner. For that reason the Fuehrer spoke at that time in a way designed to tell Italy, so to speak, that, if it came to difficulties with Yugoslavia, he would support Italy. It can be understood only from the situation which was this: Germany, with Italy's assistance, had already peacefully carried out some of her revisions in Europe, except for Danzig and the Corridor, in which Mussolini supported Hitler. I remember the situation.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: That is quite a long explanation. But it is not an explanation of the words I put to you which is the important thing. "It would be best to liquidate uncertain neutrals one after the other." Are you denying that that was your policy, to liquidate uncertain neutrals?

VON RIBBENTROP: No, it was not that. That cannot be taken so literally, for in diplomatic discussions -- and I do not think it is different in other countries -- many things are said sometimes ...

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: I want to...

VON RIBBENTROP: This was the question of Yugoslavia.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: This had always been Mussolini's view, hadn't it, that the Balkans should be attacked at the earliest possible opportunity?

VON RIBBENTROP: That I do not know.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Well, would you look at Document 2818-PS. My Lord, this will be Exhibit GB-292. Remember this is the secret additioilal protocol to the Friendship and Alliance Pact between Germany and Italy made on the 22d of May 1939, and appended to it there are some comments by Mussolini on the 30th of May 1939. Do you see?

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VON RIBBENTROP: What page?

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Well, I just wanted you to look at two passages. Do you see where the comments by Mussolini begin? Under the Pact itself, do you see the comment by Mussolini?

VON RIBBENTROP: Yes, here it is.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Well now, Number I says:

"The war between the plutocratic and, therefore, selfishly conservative nations and the densely populated and poor nations is inevitable. One must prepare in the light of this situation."

Now, if you will turn to Paragraph 7, you will see Mussolini is hoping that the war will be postponed, and he is saying what should happen if the war comes; he says that:

"The war which the great democracies are preparing is a war of exhaustion. One must therefore start with the worst premise, which contains 100 percent probability. The Axis will get nothing more from the rest of the world. This assumption is hard, but the strategic positions reached by the Axis diminish considerably the vicissitude and the danger of a war of exhaustion. For this purpose one must take the whole Danube and Balkan area immediately after the very first hours of the war. One will not be satisfied with declarations of neutrality but must occupy the territories and use them for the procurement of necessary food and industrial war supplies."

Do you see that?

VON RIBBENTROP: Yes, I have it.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Dont you agree that it was Mussolini's view that the Balkans should be attacked at the earliest possible moment?

VON RIBBENTROP: They are utterances of Mussolini which I see here for the first time. I did not know them.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Now, I want you to come to the remarks of Hitler which you have seen considerably more than once. You remember, after the Simovic *coup d'etat* on the 26th of March, there was a meeting, a conference with Hitler, where he announced his policy:

"The Fuehrer is determined, without waiting for possible loyalty declarations of the new government, to make all preparations in order to destroy Yugoslavia militarily and as a state.

With regard to foreign policy neither will diplomatic inquiries be made nor ultimatums presented. Assurances of the Yugoslav Government, which cannot be trusted in any case in the future, will be taken note of. The attack will

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start as soon as the means and troops available for it are ready." (Document Number 1746-PS)

Do you remember Hitler's saying that on the 27th of March?

VON RIBBENTROP: I do not remember that. Could I perhaps see the document?

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Don't you remember it? It has been read many times in this court, Hitler's statement.

VON RIBBENTROP: Yes, I remember it, not the individual words, but in general.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Do you remember that was the sense of it, and I read his words. Now, that was the policy...

VON RIBBENTROP: I do not know what you mean by "the sense of it."

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Well, I'll put it to you now. What I mean is this, that it was your policy to attack Yugoslavia without asking them for assurances, without any diplomatic action of any kind. You decided to attack Yugoslavia and to bomb Belgrade. Isn't that right?

VON RIBBENTROP: No, it was entirely different; and I ask to be permitted to explain the actual state of the case.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: I want your explanation of these points which I have specifically read and mentioned to you. "No diplomatic inquiries will be made." Why did you decide, or why did Hitler decide, and you help, to attack Yugoslavia without making any diplomatic inquiries, without giving the new government any chance to give you assurances? Why did you do it?

VON RIBBENTROP: Because the new government had been formed mainly by England, as one of the British interrogation officers himself, in the course of the preliminary hearings, admitted to me. Therefore it was perfectly clear to the Fuehrer, when the Simovic Putsch was carried out, that the enemies of Germany at that time stood behind Simovic's government and that it mobilized the army -- this information had been received -- in order to attack the Italian army from the rear. It was not my policy, for I was called into the conference of which you are speaking only later, I believe, and at that time Hitler categorically announced his position without being contradicted by anyone. I ask you to question the military men about that. I was present, and had a serious encounter with the Fuehrer.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Did you think it right to attack this country without any diplomatic measures being taken at all, to cause military destruction, to use Hitler's words, "with unmerciful harshness" and to destroy the capital of Belgrade by waves of

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bomber attacks? Did you think that was right? I ask you a simple question: Did you think it was right?

VON RIBBENTROP: I cannot answer this question either "yes" or "no," as you want it, without giving an explanation.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Then you need not answer it. If you cannot answer that question "yes" or "no," you need no answer it at all. And you come on to the next point, which is the question of Russia. Now, as far as I could understand your statement, you said that Hitler had decided to attack the Soviet Union after Mr. Molotov's visit to Berlin on, I think, the 12th of November of 1940.

VON RIBBENTROP: I did not say that, because I did not know it.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Well, as I understood it, one of the reasons which you were giving as a justification, for the attack on the Soviet Union was what was said by Mr. Molotov during his visit of November 1940. Isn't that what you said?

VON RIBBENTROP: That was one of the reasons that caused the Fuehrer concern. I did not know anything about an attack at that time.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: You know that the Defence Jodl says that even during the Western campaign, that is, May and June 1940, Hitler had told him that he had made a fundamental decision to take steps against this danger, that is, the Soviet Union "the moment our military position made it at all possible." Did you know that?

VON RIBBENTROP: I learned that first now here in Nuremberg.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: That is Document L-172, US 34, Jodl's lecture. And did you know that on the 14th of August 1940 General Thoma was informed during a conference with Goering that the Fuehrer desired punctual deliveries to the Russians only until the spring of 1941; that "later on we would have no further interest in completely satisfying the Russian demands." Did you know that?

VON RIBBENTROP: No, I did not.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: And did you know that in November of 1940, General Thoma and State Secretaries Korner, Neumann, Becker, and General Von Hannecken were informed by Goering of the action planned in the East? Did you know that?

VON RIBBENTROP: No, I did not know that either.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: You know now, don't you, that a long time before any of the matters raised in Molotov's visit

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came up for discussion, Hitler had determined to attack the Soviet Union?

VON RMBENTROP: No, I did not know that at all. I knew that Hitler had apprehensions but I knew nothing about an attack. I was not informed about military preparations, because these matters were always dealt with separately.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Even on 18 December, when Hitler issued the directive Number 21 on "Barbarossa," he told you nothing about it?

VON RIBBENTROP: Yes, because just in December, as I happen to remember exactly, I had another long talk with the Milirer in order to obtain his consent to win the Soviet Union as a partner to the Three-Power Pact, and to make it a four-power pact. Hitler was not altogether enthusiastic about this idea, as I noticed; but he told me, "We have already made this and that together; perhaps we will succeed with this too." These were his words. That was in December. I believe there is also an affidavit about that from a witness, which the Defense is going to present.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Do you understand what you are saying? This is after the Defendant Goering had announced it to General Thoma and these under-secretaries, after the directive had actually gone out for Barbarossa, that Hitler let you suggest that you should try to get the Soviet Union to join the Tripartite Pact, without ever telling you that he had his orders out for the attack on the Soviet Union. Do you really expect anyone to believe that?

VON RMBENTROP: I did not quite understand the question.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: The question was, do you really expect anyone to believe that after it had been announced time and again that the Reich was going to attack the Soviet Union, and after the actual directive had gone out for the attack, that Hitler let you tell him that you were thinking of asking them to join the Tripartite Pact? Is that your evidence?

VON RMBENTROP: Yes, that is exactly the way it was. I suggested this to Hitler again in December, and received his consent for further negotiations. I knew nothing in December of an aggressive war against the Soviet Union.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: And it was quite clear that, as far as your department was concerned, you were getting the most favorable reports about the Soviet Union and about the unlikelihood of the Soviet Union making any incursion into political affairs inimical to Germany? Is that right, so far as your reports from your own ambassador and your own people in Russia were concerned?

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VON RIBBENTROP: Reports of this sort came from the embassy in Moscow. I submitted them repeatedly, or rather always, to the Fuehrer but his answer was that the diplomats and military attache in Moscow were the worst informed men in the world. That was his answer.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: But that was your honest view based on your own information, that there was no danger from Russia, that Russia was keeping honestly to the agreement that she had made with you. That was your honest view, was it not?

VON RIBBENTROP: No, I did not say that. I said those were the reports from the diplomats, which we received from Moscow.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Didn't you believe them? Didn't you believe your own staff yourself?

VON RIBBENTROP: I was very skeptical myself as to whether these reports were reliable, because the Fuehrer, who received reports, had reports of an altogether different nature and the political attitude also pointed in a different direction.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: At any rate, in the spring of 1941, your office joined in the preparations for the attack on the Soviet Union, did it not?

VON RIBBENTROP: I do not know precisely when, but in the spring things came to a head and there must have been conferences between some offices that dealt with the possibility of a conflict with the Soviet Union. However, I do not recall details about that any more.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: I see. Again, I do not want to occupy too much time over it, but it is right, is it not, that in April of 1941 you were co-operating with Rosenberg's office in preparing for the taking over of Eastern territories, and, on the 18th of May, you issued a memorandum with regard to the preparation of the naval campaign?

VON RIBBENTROP: So far as the preparations with Rosenberg are concerned, that is in error. I spoke, according to my recollection about this matter to Rosenberg only after the outbreak of war. So far as that Navy memorandum is concerned, I saw that document here; I had not known of it previously. I believe it is an expert opinion on international law about matters which might arise in connection with a war in the Baltic Sea. Such expert opinion was doubtless submitted.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: It says, "The Foreign Office has prepared, for use in Barbarossa, the attached draft of a declaration of operational zones." Don't you remember anything about that?

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VON RIBBENTROP: No, I believe that did not reach me at all at that time. That was acted upon by another office. Of course I am responsible for everything that happens in my ministry.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Wasn't Ambassador Ritter the liaison officer between your office and the Wehrmacht?

VON RIBBENTROP: Yes, that is right.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Now, again, I want you to help me about one or two other matters. You have told us that you negotiated the Anti-Comintern Pact back in 1936; and, of course, at that time the Anti-Comintern Pact -- and I think you said so yourself -- was directed against the Soviet Union. That is so, isn't it?

VON RIBBENTROP: Yes, it was more an ideological pact, which, of course, had certain political implications. That is right.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: And that was extended by the Tripartite Pact of the 27th of September 1940? That was an extension of the first pact, was it not?

VON RIBBENTROP: It had in itself nothing to do with the first pact, because this one was a purely political, economic, and military pact.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Well now, the fact is -- and I think I can take this quite shortly -- that you were urging Japan to enter the war quite early in March of 1941, weren't you.

VON RIBBENTROP: That could be; at that time for an attack on England.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Yes. I am taking it shortly, because you have given your explanation. You say you were at war with England, and therefore you were entitled to see an ally in the Japanese. That is your point, is it not?

VON RIBBENTROP: I do not believe that I did anything other than what other diplomats would do, for instance, what those of Great Britain have done in America, and later in Russia.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: I am not going to put any points to you on that actual fact; but it did occur to you quite early, didn't it, that if Japan came into the war, then it was a possibility that the United States might be brought in very shortly after? And you agreed, in April of 1941, that if the coming in of Japan produced the fact that Japan would be involved with the United States, you would be prepared to fight the United States too. That is right isn't it?

VON RIBBENTROP: No, that is not correct. I believe I did everything I could, until the day of Pearl Harbor, to keep America out of the war. I believe also that that is proved by many documents that I have seen here for the first time.

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SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Well now, since you said that, I would like you to look at the Document 352 of your book, at Page 204 of the English document book.

VON RIBBENTROP: Yes, I know this document; I have read it here already.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Well, that was a week before Pearl Harbor, on the 29th of November; and according to the Japanese Ambassador, you are saying this to him -- if you look at Paragraph 1:

"Ribbentrop: 'It is essential that Japan effect the New Order in East Asia without losing this opportunity. There never has been, and probably never will be, a time when closer co-operation under the Tripartite Pact is so important. If Japan hesitates at this time and Germany goes ahead and establishes her European New Order, all the military might of Britain and the United States will be concentrated against Japan. As the Fuehrer Hitler said today, there are fundamental differences in the very right to exist between Germany and Japan, and the United States. We have received advice to the effect that there is practically no hope of the JapaneseUnited States negotiations being concluded successfully, because of the fact that the United States is putting up a stiff front.

"If this is indeed the fact of the case, and if Japan reaches a decision to fight Britain and the United States, I am confident that that will not only be to the interest of Germany and Japan jointly, but would bring about favorable results for Japan herself.'" (Document D-656)

Do you still say, in view of that document and that statement that you made to the Japanese Ambassador, that you were trying to prevent war with the United States? I suggest to you that you were doing everything to encourage Japan to go to war with the United States.

VON RIBBENTROP: I must contradict you there, Mr. Prosecutor; that is not true. I do not know this document, nor do I know where it comes from. At any rate, under no circumstances did I express it that way; and I regret that all the other documents which prove that I tried again and again to keep the United States out of the war, have not yet been read here. I have seen this document here and I have been pondering all the time as to how this passage would have gotten into the document. All the other documents, I believe a dozen or a dozen and a half, which have been presented here prove clearly my wish to keep America out of the war. I can prove that for years I had made

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efforts in all fields, despite the intransigent attitude of the United States, not to undertake anything against America. I can explain this only as follows: The Japanese Ambassador earnestly desired that his country should take some action and I know he sent many telegrams to Tokyo in order to get Japan to participate in the war, particularly against Singapore. I can only presume that this is perhaps, if I may say so, an incorrect interpretation of this conference. I ask you to give the Defense an opportunity to submit all the other documents up to this date, which will prove the exact opposite of what is laid down in this one paragraph.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Well, this is the official report to the Government of the Japanese Ambassador. You say that he is wrong when he says that you told him -- he gives your exact words -- that you were comforted that it would not only be in the interest of Germany and Japan jointly but would bring about favorable results for Japan herself.

Well, just look at the next document, if you deny that one, on Page 356. This is another report of the Japanese Ambassador and he said, the day after Pearl Harbor:

"At 1 o'clock ... I called on Foreign Minister Ribbentrop and told him our wish was to have Germany and Italy issue formal declarations of war on America at once. Ribbentrop replied that Hitler was then in the midst of a conference at general headquarters, discussing how the formalities of declaring war could be carried out, so as to make a good impression on the German people, and that he would transmit your wish to him at once and do whatever he was able to have it carried out properly."

Now, look at the last three lines:

"At that time Ribbentrop told me that on the morning of the 8th, Hitler issued orders to the entire German Navy to attack American ships whenever and wherever they might meet them." (Document Number D-657)

That was 3 days before the declaration of war. You say that that report of the Japanese Ambassador is also wrong?

VON RIBBENTROP: I believe that it is an error.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: What is wrong about it?

VON RIBBENTROP: I believe it is an error. That was after the attack on Pearl Harbor?

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Exactly, the day after Pearl Harbor.

VON RIBBENTROP: That was an order of Adolf Hitler's to attack America who, as everyone knows, had been attacking our ships for months. This is an altogether different affair.

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SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: When you say "attacking German ships," do you mean defending themselves against German submarines?

VON RIBBENTROP: No, so far as I know, some months earlier, I cannot tell you the exact date; but it was a long time before Pearl Harbor, we had delivered an official protest to the United States, in which we pointed out, in the case of the two ships Greer and Kerne, that these two boats had pursued German submarines and had thrown depth charges at them. I believe the Secretary of the Navy Knox admitted this openly in a press conference. I mentioned yesterday that Hitler said in his speech in Munich that he did not give the order to shoot or to attack American vessels but he had given the order to fire back if they fired first.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: What I want to know from you is this: Did you approve of the policy of ordering the entire German Navy to attack American ships whenever and wherever they might meet them 3 days before war was declared? Did you approve of that?

VON RIBBENTROP: I cannot say anything about that now, because I do not remember it and do not even know the document.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Now, I want to ask you about another point. Do you remember that the ...

VON RIBBENTROP: It would have been understandable, that I must add.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: You have given your answer. Do you remember, in June 1944, that there was a conference about which we have heard evidence, regarding the shooting of what is known as "terror-fliers"?

Now, just listen to this question and try to answer it directly, if you would. Is it correct, as is stated in the report, that you wished to include among terror-fliers every type of terror attack on the German civilian population, that is, including bombing attacks on cities? Is it right that you wished to include the airmen engaged in attacks on German cities as terror-fliers?

VON RIBBENTROP: No, it is not true like that.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Well, look at Page 391. This is a report signed by General Warlimont on the conference on the 6th of June, and in the fourth line -- well, let me read it. It says:

"ObergruppenFuehrer [Kaltenbrunner](#) informed the deputy chief of the Operations Staff in Klessheim on the afternoon of the 6th that a conference on this question had been held shortly before, between the Reich Marshal, the Reich Foreign

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Minister, and ReichsFuehrer SS. Contrary to the original suggestion made by Ribbentrop, who wished to include every type of terror attack on the German civilian population, that is, also bombing attacks on cities, it was agreed at the above conference that only attacks carried out with aircraft armament should be considered as criminal actions in that sense."
(Document Number 135-PS)

Do you say that Kaltenbrunner was wrong when he said that you wished to include every type of attack?

VON RIBBENTROP: Yesterday I answered this question at length. I do not know whether I should refer to this point again. I dealt with this point, I think, very exhaustively. If you wish, I can repeat it now.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Well I do not want you to repeat it. I want you to answer my question. Do you say that Kaltenbrunner was wrong when he said at this conference that you wished to include those who were engaged in bombing of cities?

VON RIIBBENTROP: That is not so. First of all, so far as I remember, this conference never took place; and, secondly, I stated my attitude perfectly clearly yesterday, how I wished to treat terror-fliers.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Well, answer my question.

VON RIBBENTROP: No, that is not true as you have stated it.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: I see. Then answer this question. Did you approve that those you called "terror-fliers" were to be left to be lynched by the population or handed over to the SS?

VON RIBBENTROP: No, that was not my attitude.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Well, now, would you look on Page 393, Page 214 of the English? This, as you know, is a memorandum from the Foreign Office; and it is stated on Page 396 that General Warlimont states that Ambassador Ritter has advised us by telephone that the Minister for Foreign Affairs has approved this draft (Document 740-PS). The draft deals with the two actions in Paragraph 1, that of lynching, and the draft says, "The German authorities are not directly responsible, since death occurred before a German official intervened" (Document 728-PS).

Do you agree with that view? Is that your view of the lynching of fliers?

VON RIBBENTROP: No, that is not my view. I explained that yesterday quite exhaustively and stated what my attitude was toward this document. This document is an expert opinion of the Foreign Office, which was submitted to me. I do not know how it originated, upon my order or upon a statement of the military

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authorities. I did not approve this expert opinion as it is submitted to me here, but I did send it to the Fuehrer and asked him to decide about it. The Fuehrer then called this document "nonsense," I believe, and therewith this expert opinion of the Foreign Office was rejected and did not come into effect.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: So that, with regard to this, you say that when Warlimont says that Ambassador Ritter advised the Wehrmacht by telephone on 29 June that you approved the draft, that either Warlimont is not speaking the truth or Ritter is not speaking the truth?

VON RIBBENTROP: At any rate, it is not true, because it can be seen from another document which I have also seen here that this document was sent to the Fuehrer and that I said there that the Fuehrer must approve it. I did see also another document regarding it. That is also my recollection of the matter.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Well, then, if you referred to the Fuehrer's view, let us just have a look at what that was. Have a look at Document 3780-PS, which will be GB-293, which is an account of a meeting that you and Hitler had with Oshima on the 27th of May 1944. It is on Page 11, Lines 9 to 12. Do you remember in your presence Hitler advising Oshima that the Japanese should hang, not shoot, every American terror pilot, that the Americans will think it over before making such attacks? Did you agree with that view?

VON RIBBENTROP: No, I do not agree with that view. If that is in this document, that is not my meaning, not my opinion.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: I see. Well, now ...

VON RIBBENTROP: I do not even know where what you said here is in the document.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: You will find it on Page 11, Lines 9 to 12.

VON RIBBENTROP: No, I do not remember that, but I can only say that this attitude of Hitler's as it appears in this document was brought about by the terrible results of the air attacks at that time.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: I heard all that before. I asked you whether you agreed or not; you said "no." I want you now to deal with another point.

VON RIBBENTROP: I want to say something further, however, regarding this point because it is of decisive importance.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: You will say that to learned Counsel after you have answered my question on this. I want you now to direct your attention to Stalag Luft III. You may have heard me asking a number of witnesses a certain number of

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questions about it. These were the 50 British airmen who were murdered by the SS after they escaped. Do you know that? Do you know what I am talking about?

VON RIBBENTROP: Yes, I do.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: You remember that my colleague, Mr. Eden, made a strong statement in the House of Commons, saying that these men had been murdered and that Great Britain would exact justice upon the murderers? Do you remember that, in June of 1944?

VON RIBBENTROP: I heard of this through the speech made by Mr. Eden in the House of Commons, yes.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: And do you remember that the Reich Government issued a statement saying that, in a communication by the Reich Government conveyed to the British via Switzerland, this unqualifiable charge of the British Foreign Minister had been sharply refuted, that being issued in July 1944? Do you remember that being issued?

VON RIBBENTROP: No, I do not remember it. I remember only the following: That at that time we received evidence of what had happened and that it was communicated to us in a note from the protecting powers. That is all I know about it.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: That is what I wanted to ask you: Did you know at the time that this statement was issued -- did you know that these officers had been murdered in cold blood?

VON RIBBENTROP: No, I did not. I heard that these men had been shot while trying to escape. At that time, to be sure, we did have the impression that everything was not in order, I know that. I remember that.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Let me take it in two stages. Who told you the lie that these men had been shot trying to escape? Who informed you of that lie?

VON RIBBENTROP: I do not remember in detail. At that time we received the documentation from the competent authorities and a memorandum was forwarded to the Swiss Government.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: From whom did you get your documentation which contained that lie? Did you get it from Himmler or Goering?

VON RIBBENTROP: I do not know.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Then you told us, I think, that you had a good idea that things were not all right, hadn't you?

VON RIBBENTROP: Yes.

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SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Thank you. Now, I want you to tell us a word about your connection with the SS. You are not suggesting, are you, at this stage that you were merely an honorary member of the SS? It has been suggested by your counsel, and I am sure it must have been on some misunderstanding of information, that you were merely an honorary member of the SS. That is not the case, is it?

VON R113BENTROP: That is no misunderstanding. This is exactly how it was: I received the SS uniform from Adolf Hitler. I did not serve in the SS, but as ambassador and later as Foreign Minister it was customary to have a rank of some sort and I had received the rank of SS Fuehrer.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: I put it to you that that is entirely untrue, that you joined the SS by application before you became ambassador-at-large in May 1933, isn't that right?

VON RIBBENTROP: I know that. At any rate I always belonged to the SS.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: You said just now it was honorary, because Hitler wanted you to have a uniform. I am putting it to you; you applied to join the SS in May 1933, in the ordinary way. Did you?

VON RIBBENTROP: Of course, one had to make an application; but the fact was this, that I occasionally went around in a grey greatcoat and thereupon Hitler said I must wear a uniform. I do not remember when that was. It must have been 1933. As ambassador I received a higher rank, as Foreign Minister I received a still higher one.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: And in May 1933, after you made application, you joined the SS in the not too high rank of StandartenFuehrer, didn't you?

VON RIBBENTROP: Yes, that could be.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: And you became an OberFuehrer only on the 20th of April 1935, a BrigadeFuehrer on 18 June 1935, and GruppenFuehrer on the 13th of September 1936 -- that was after you became an ambassador -- and ObergruppenFuehrer on the 20th of April 1940. Before you were made an ambassador you had been in the SS for 3 years and you had received promotion in the ordinary way, when you did your work with the SS, isn't that so?

VON RIBBENTROP: Without ever taking any steps or doing anything myself in the SS, yes, that is correct.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Just look. It is Document D-744(a), Exhibit GB-294. The correspondence is 744(b). You may

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take it; you need not go through it in detail. That is your application, with all the particulars. I just want to ask you one or two things about it. You asked to join, did you not, the "Totenkopf," the Death's-Head Division of the SS?

VON RIBBENTROP: No, that cannot be true.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Don't you remember getting a special Deaths-Head ring and dagger from Himmler for your services? Don't you?

VON RIBBENTROP: No, I do not remember. I never belonged to a Death's-Head Division. You were just talking about a Death's Head Division, were you not?

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: A Death's-Head Division.

VON RIBBENTROP: No, that is not so. If it says so here, it is not true. But I think that I at one time received a so-called dagger, like all SS Fuehrer. That is correct.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: And the ring, too. Here is a letter dated the 5th of November 1935, to the Personnel Office of the ReichsFuehrer SS: "In reply to your question I have to inform you that BrigadeFuehrer Von Ribbentrop's ring size is 17. Heil Hitler," (signed) (Adjutant) "Thorner." Do you remember getting that?

VON RIBBENTROP: I believe that everyone received such a ring but I do not remember precisely. No doubt it is true.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: And you took, didn't you, continuous interest in the SS from 1933 up to well into the war? I think your correspondence with Himmler goes on to well into 1941 or 1942.

VON RIBBENTROP: Yes, that is quite possible, that is certainly correct. Of course, we had a great deal to do with the SS in all fields. That is quite clear.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: You had, and especially in the field of concentration camps, hadn't you? Are you saying that you did not know that concentration camps were being carried on in an enormous scale?

VON RIBBENTROP: No, I knew nothing about that.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: I want you to look around for the moment. [*A map behind the witness box was uncovered.*] That is an enlargement of the exhibits put in by the French Prosecution and these red spots are concentration camps. Now, I would just like you to look at it. We will see now one of the reasons for the location of your various residences. There, one north of Berlin, Sonnenburg. Do you see roughly where that is on that map?

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Berlin.

VON RIBBENTROP: Sonnenburg is 1 hour's auto ride from Berlin.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: North of Berlin?

VON RIBBENTROP: No, east of Berlin.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Let us take another house. You are quite near it yourself, your schloss or tower at Fuschl. That is quite near the border; just over the border, and very near it, the group of camps which existed around Mauthausen. Do you see them, just above your right hand? Do you see the group of camps, the Mauthausen group?

VON RIBBENTROP: I should like to state on my oath that I heard the name of "Mauthausen" for the first time in Nuremberg.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Let us take another of the places. You say you did not go there very often, but you used to ...

VON RIBBENTROP: I believe I can make this much more brief for you. I can say that I heard of only two concentration camps until I came here -- no it was three: Dachau, Oranienburg, and Theresienstadt. All the other names I heard here for the first time. The Theresienstadt camp was an old people's home for Jews, and I believe was visited a few times by the International Red Cross. I never heard previously of all the other camps. I wish to make that quite clear.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Do you know that near Mauthausen there were 33 camps at various places, within a comparatively short distance, and 45 camps as to which the commandant did not give the names because there were so many of them, and in the 33 camps there were over 100,000 internees? Are you telling the Tribunal that in all your journeys to Fuschl you never heard of the camps at Mauthausen, where 100,000 people were shut up?

VON RIBBENTROP: That was entirely unknown to me, and I can produce dozens of witnesses who can testify to that. Dozens.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: I do not care how many witnesses you produce. I ask you to look at that map again. You were a responsible minister in the Government of that country from the 4th of February 1938 till the defeat of Germany in May 1945, a period of 7 and a quarter years. Are you telling the Tribunal that anyone could be a responsible minister in that country where these hundreds of concentration camps existed and not know anything about them except two?

VON RIBBENTROP: It may be amazing but it is 100 percent true.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: I suggest to you that it is not only amazing, but that it is so incredible that it must be false. How could you be ignorant of these camps? Did you never see Himmler?

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VON RIBBENTROP: No, I never saw him about these things. Never. These things were kept absolutely secret and we heard here, for the very first time, what went on in them. Nobody knew anything about them. That may sound astounding but I am positively convinced that the gentlemen in the dock also knew nothing about all that was going on.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: We will hear from them in their turn. Did you know that at Auschwitz alone ...

VON RIBBENTROP: I heard the name Auschwitz here for the first time.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: And the German official of Auschwitz has sworn an affidavit that 4 million people were put to death in the camp. Are you telling the Tribunal that that happened without your knowing anything about it?

VON RIBBENTROP: That was entirely unknown to me. I can state that here on my oath.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Well, now, there is one other subject, which I would like you to deal with; and here, fortunately, I am in the position of assisting your memory with some documents. It is a question of the partisans. I want you to look at a few documents, three documents, with regard to that.

THE PRESIDENT: Will you be able to finish tonight?

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Yes, I shall, if Your Lordship will allow me 5 minutes. That is what I have been trying to do.

[Turning to the defendant.] Do you agree that you were in favor of the harshest treatment of people in the occupied countries?

VON RIBBENTROP: I did not understand. Could you repeat the question?

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: My question is, would it be a fair way of expressing your point of view to say that you were in favor of the harshest treatment of -- I will put it first of all -- of partisans?

VON RIBBENTROP: I do not know whether I ever expressed myself about the treatment of partisans, I do not recall having done so. In any case, I was against it.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: All right, look at Document D-735, which will be Exhibit GB-295. That is a discussion between you and Count Ciano in the presence of Field Marshal Keitel and Marshal Cavallero in the Fuehrer's headquarters after breakfast on the 19th of December 1942. Now, if you will look at Page 2, you will see that there is a passage where Field Marshal Keitel told the Italian gentlemen that:

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"The Croatian area was to be cleaned up by German and Italian troops working in co-operation; and this while it was still winter, in view of the strong British influence in this area. The Fuehrer explained that the Serbian conspirators were to be burned out, and that no soft methods were to be used in doing this. Field Marshal Keitel here interjected that every village in which partisans were found had to be burned down. Continuing, the Reich Foreign Minister declared that Roatta must not leave the third zone, but must on the contrary advance, and this in the closest collaboration with the German troops. In this connection Field Marshal Keitel requested the Italian gentlemen not to regard the utilization of Croatian troops to help in this cleaning up operation as a favoring of the Croats. The Reich Foreign Minister stated in this connection that the Poglavnik to whom he had spoken very clearly, was 100 percent ready to come to an agreement with Italy."

Did that represent your view, that "the Serbian conspirators should be burned out"?

VON RIBBENTROP: Please?

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Did that represent your view, that "the Serbian conspirators should be burned out"?

VON RIBBENTROP: I do not know that expression. At any rate it is certain that they should have been locked up.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: What it means is that their villages should be razed to the ground by fire.

VON RIBBENTROP: Where did I say that? I do not believe I said that.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: That is the Fuehrer's point of view. Was it your point of view?

VON RIBBENTROP: The Fuehrer took a very harsh attitude on these questions, and I know that occasionally harsh orders had to be issued also from other offices, including the military. It was a struggle for life and death. One should not forget that it was war.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Are you denying...

VON RIBBENTROP: At any rate, I do not see where I said anything about partisans, that is...

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: You say that is not your point of view? Is that what you are saying? That is not your point of view? Are you saying that it is not your point of view as to the way to treat them? Do not look at the next document. Tell me, is that your point of view?

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VON RIBBENTROP: Please repeat the question that you want me to answer.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Do you say that you were not in favor of harsh treatment of partisans?

VON RIBBENTROP: I am of the opinion that the partisans who attack the troops in the rear should be treated harshly. Yes, I am of that opinion, I believe everyone in the Army is of that opinion, and every politician.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Including women and children?

VON RIBBENTROP: No, by no means.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Just look at that, if you deny this attitude to women and children. Look at the document, Number D-741.

My Lord, that will be Document D-741; this will be GB-296.

[Turning to the defendant.] Will you look at the end of that. That is a conference between you and Ambassador Alfieri in Berlin on 21 February 1943. The last paragraph says:

"Continuing, the Reich Foreign Minister emphasized that the conditions which Roatta's policy had helped to produce in Croatia were causing the Fuehrer great concern. It was appreciated on the German side that Roatta wished to spare Italian blood, but it was believed that he was, as it were, trying to drive out Satan with Beelzebub by this policy. These partisan gangs had to be exterminated, including men, women, and children, as their further existence imperiled the lives of German and Italian men, women, and children."

Do you still say that you did not want harsh treatment of women and children?

VON RIBBENTROP: What page is that on?

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: It is on Pages 10 to 13. It is the last paragraph of my translation.

"These partisan gangs had to be exterminated, including men, women and children, as their further existence imperiled the lives of German and Italian men, women, and children."

VON RIBBENTROP: If I did say that at any time, it must have been under great excitement. In any case, it does not correspond to my opinion which I have proved by my other acts during the war. I cannot say anything else at the moment.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: I will just show you one of your other acts, which will be the final one, if the Tribunal will bear with me. It is Document D-740, which will be GB-297. This is a memorandum of the conversation between the Reich Foreign

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Minister and Secretary of State Bastianini in the presence of Ambassadors Von Mackensen and Alfieri at Klessheim castle on the afternoon of the 8th of April 1943. If you will look at the beginning, I think you were discussing some strike in Italy. You say:

"The Reich Foreign Minister's supposition that this strike had perhaps been instigated by British agents was energetically contested by Bastianini. There were Italian communists who were still in Italy and who received their orders from Moscow. The Reich Foreign Minister replied that, in such a case, only merciless action would remedy."

And then, after a statement with regard to the information, you say:

"He (the Reich Foreign Minister) did not want to discuss Italy but rather the occupied territories, where it had been shown that one would not get anywhere with soft methods or in the endeavor to reach an agreement. The Reich Foreign Minister then explained his views by a comparison between Denmark and Norway. In Norway brutal measures had been taken which had evoked lively protests, particularly in Sweden."

And then you go on, and after a certain criticism of Dr. Best...

VON RIBBENTROP: I cannot find it; what page is it on, please?

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: The paragraph begins: "The Reich Foreign Minister's supposition that this strike has perhaps been instigated by British agents..."

VON RIBBENTROP: Yes, here it is.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Well, you see what I have put to you. You say:

"Only merciless action would be any good. In Norway brutal measures had been taken."

And at the beginning of the next paragraph:

"In Greece, too, brutal action would have to be taken if the Greeks should sense a change for the better. He was of the opinion that the demobilized Greek Army should be deported from Greece with lightning speed, and that the Greeks should be shown in an iron manner who was master in the country. Hard methods of this kind were necessary if one was waging a war against Stalin, which was not a gentleman's war but a brutal war of extermination."

And then, with regard to France, after some statement about the French you say:

"Coming back to Greece, the Reich Foreign Minister once again stressed the necessity of taking severe measures."

And in the third line of the next paragraph:

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"The Fuehrer would have to take radical measures in the occupied territories to mobilize the local labor potential in order that the American armament potential might be equaled."

Do you agree? Does that fairly express your view, that you wanted the most severe measures taken in occupied territories in order to mobilize labor to increase the Reich war potential?

VON RIBBENTROP: I can say the following in regard to this document. I know that at that time...

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Well, you can say that, but you can answer my question first. Do these views express your view that...

VON RIBBENTROP: No.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: ... severe measures should be taken with foreign labor and with people in occupied territories. Does that document express your view?

VON RIBBENTROP: No, it does not.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Then why did you say it? Why did you say these things?

VON RIBBENTROP: Because at that time, on the commission of the Fuehrer, I had to keep the Italians' noses to the grindstone, since there was complete chaos in some of the areas and the Italians always attempted to cause complete confusion in the rear areas of the German Army by some of the measures they took there. That is why I occasionally had to speak very harshly with the Italians. I recall that very distinctly. At that time the Italians were fighting together with the Chetniks partly against German troops; it was complete chaos there and for this reason I often used rather earnest and harsh language with the diplomats -- perhaps an exaggerated language. But things actually looked quite different afterwards.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: It was not a bit exaggeration, was it, in both Norway and Greece? You were taking the most brutal measures against the occupied countries.

VON RIBBENTROP: No, that is not so. We had absolutely nothing to say in Norway; we always tried to do things differently. And in Denmark we did everything to reduce these harsh measures, which were in part necessary, because of the paratroopers and so forth, and tried not to have them carried out.

I think it can be proved, from a number of other documents, that I and the Foreign Office always worked toward compromise in the various occupied countries. I do not believe that it is quite fair and correct to take only one or two such statements from the innumerable documents where occasionally I did use harsh words. It is certain that in the course of 6 years of war harsh language

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must be used from time to time. I may remind you that foreign statesmen also used harsh language regarding the treatment of Germany. But I am sure they did not mean it that way.

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Tell me this: Every time today when you have been confronted with a document which attributes to you some harsh language or the opposite of what you have said here you say that on that occasion you were telling a diplomatic lie. Is that what it comes to? Thank you very much.

THE PRESIDENT: Sir David, do you have all these documents in evidence?

SIR DAVID MAXWELL-FYFE: Yes, My Lord.

[The Tribunal adjourned until 2 April 1946 at 1000 hours.]

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